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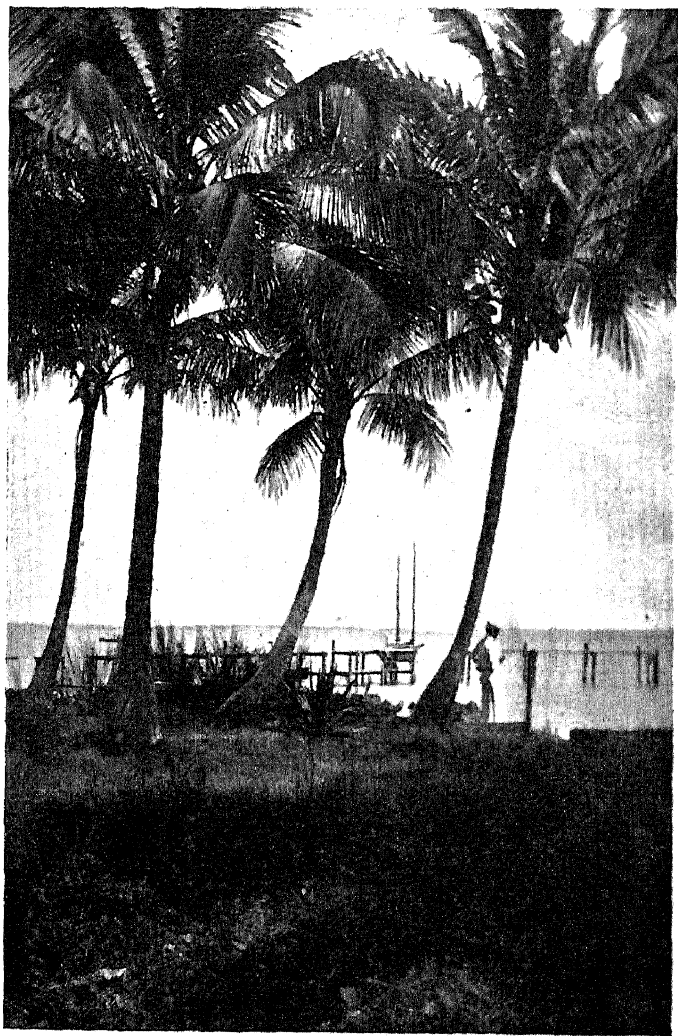
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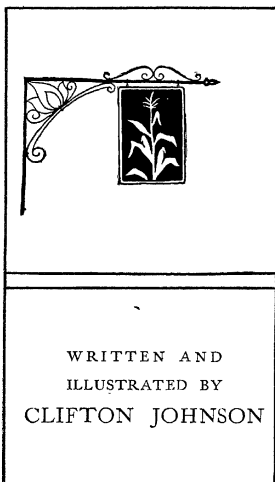
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IN SOUTHERN FLORIDA

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF THE SOUTH



Published by THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

New York *MCMIV*

LONDON: MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the material included in this volume was first published in *Outing*, *The Booklovers Magazine*, *The Pilgrim*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *The Boston Transcript*, *The Springfield Republican*, *The Interior*, and in *The Outlook*.

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Introductory Note

IN writing the present volume I have simply attempted to give a faithful record of impressions in a region where life probably has a more picturesque interest than anywhere else in our country. I, however, scarcely touch on the town life, or the progress of manufacturing; nor do I deal with the South as a land of romance and sentiment, the home of beautiful women and chivalric men — that has been amply done by the novelists. My rambling has been in the fields and woodlands, my stopping-places in the little villages and scattered farmhouses, and I write almost wholly of rustic life and nature as I saw them in my desultory journeyings.

Clifton Johnson.

Hadley, Mass.

Highways and Byways of the South

I

SPRING ON THE FLORIDA COAST



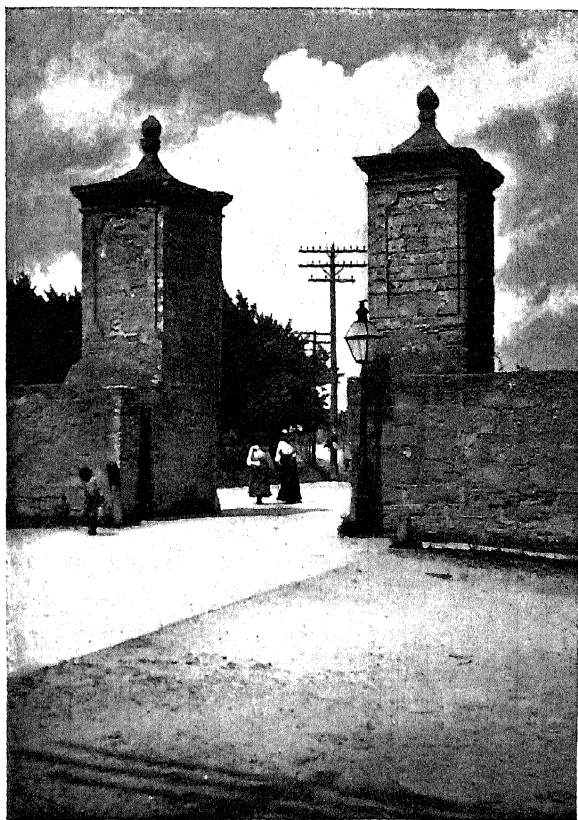
A Well

IN the North, though the winter frosts had relaxed their fiercer rigors, the weather was still raw and cold, the woodlands were wholly leafless, and the fields sear and brown. But when I sailed three days from New York southward I found myself amid blossoms and abounding green foliage, and the air was full of kindly warmth. How delightful it all was!—as if I had by some magic skipped entirely the chilly uncertainty of spring and entered at once into the serenity of early summer.

Yet I cannot say that Florida on closer acquaintance seemed quite worthy of its name; for if you would have a profusion of flowers, you must nurse and coax them. They are not such a spontaneous product of the climate as one would expect. The soil is too poor, and nowhere did the blossoms brighten and gladden the earth as our spring flowers do in the North. Indeed, the aspect of the country is for the most part rather monotonously sober — an unending, sandy level overspread with pine woods, and a low, spiny undergrowth of palmetto scrub.

After leaving Jacksonville, where I had disembarked, I first of all visited St. Augustine, and saw its ancient fort and massive city gateway. The fort is of genuine mediæval type, the only one of its kind in America. Its gray, weatherworn stones proclaim its great age, the rooms are satisfactorily gloomy and dungeon-like, and you can trace the course of the old moat round about. Both the fort and the gateway date back to the time when St. Augustine was a Spanish walled town. The place itself has one or two curious narrow thoroughfares and odd survivals of bygone architecture, but its prevailing characteristics are those of a fashionable pleasure resort. All the open fields on the outskirts have been taken possession of by the golf-players. Once, when I had stopped to watch a game, an old colored man came along and leaned over the picket fence near me.

"I want to see what they gwine do," he said.
"Good gracious alive! see whar that tall-man sen'

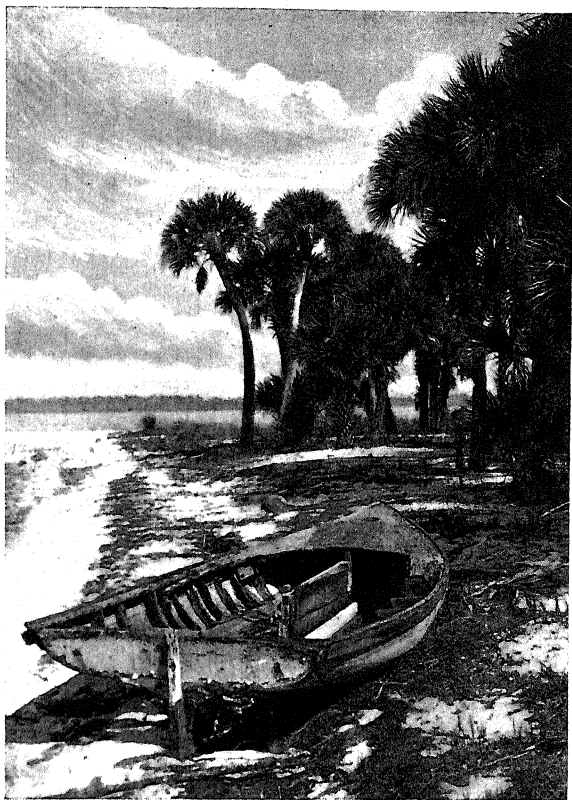


Ancient Spanish Gateway at St. Augustine

that thar li'l' ball. Well, I do say! Now he gwine
see if he c'n find it. Yes, sah, when they done knock

the ball once they foller it an' knocks it some mo'. I look at that game as much as one hundred time, an' I never make out whar de fun come in. I ain' never play it myself, sah; an' yet I got no objection to it if thar ain' no betting. That my remonstrance to cairds. If yo' play cairds, yo're boun' to bet, an' sooner or later yo're boun' to run up against one o' those yere men what can play any caird they wants to, an' then yo' lose your money. Cairds ain' a good thing — no, sah — an' I lets 'em alone. But I've seen cairds played. I've been up all night mixin' the drinks for white gemmen, an' seein' 'em play until six or eight o'clock in the mornin' — yes, sah!"

From St. Augustine I journeyed down the coast as far as Miami, and in all this long distance the portion I enjoyed most was where the railway skirted close along the shores of the Indian River — not really a river at all, but a narrow strip of the ocean shut off from the open sea by a series of islands that extend parallel with the mainland for hundreds of miles. On the shores here I caught frequent glimpses of long-legged cranes wading in the shallows, and they gave a touch of undisturbed wildness to the scene that was very pleasing. A bird much more in evidence was the buzzard. I constantly saw them when I looked from the car window, soaring on their airy vigils. If there was a prospect of a feast, they would sometimes congregate in hundreds. Word seemed to be promptly



Palmettoes on the Indian River

passed around whenever one of them found anything bad to eat, and all the friends and relatives were sure to be on hand, including a delegation of crows.

To a very great extent the railroad was hemmed in on either side by pine and palmetto forest. Pines

were the predominant trees — tall, slender, and smooth columned; but in places there were many palmettoes. The latter are the only trees of the palm family that are indigenous to the country, and while not accounted of much value they are by no means entirely useless. The trunks are occasionally cut into lengths for fence posts, and have sometimes been set up for telegraph poles, and they make specially good wharf piles, as the borers do not attack them as they do most woods. The tree's vitality is concentrated in the heart of the crowning bunch of leaves. Even flames that scorch off the leafage and burn the trunk half through are only a temporary set-back. If the central bud is not injured, the tree will endure almost anything. The soft enfoldings of new leaves that surround this bud somewhat resemble a cabbage in quality, whence comes one of the tree's names — cabbage palm. Now and then there are natives who eat the palmetto cabbage, and they declare it to be very palatable.

Miami is at the extreme end of the railway line, well down toward the point of the peninsula. I found the place laid out in right-angled streets on a grand scale; and long, straight avenues were cut through the suburban forests for miles around, that the community might grow to an enormous metropolis if fate so wills. However, very little had been built thus far, and the untamed woodland straggled into the very heart of the hamlet. Where the soil was poor, the trees were pines.

They grew so scatteringly you could see for a mile or more among their slender stems, and you seemed to be in a monotonous park, cleared of much of its timber



A Characteristic Landscape

and of all the brush save the lowly palmetto scrub. In the hollows were intervals of dark rich earth, known as "hammock land," that supported a dense growth

of banyans, rubber trees, oaks, and other hardwoods. The crowded trees and bushes of the hammock lands were draped with innumerable vines, and formed real equatorial jungles. One of these thickets had formerly covered a part of the site of the town, and I was told by the first settlers of a half-dozen years before that they could only get through it by crawling on their hands and knees. Most of the soil in and about Miami is so thin as to be scarcely apparent, and the chalky rock which makes the main substance of the earth is almost bare. This rock is much used for road-making, and the local highways are commendably hard and smooth, but very glaring in the intense Southern sunshine.

One of my walks took me to Cocoanut Grove, a village of about twenty houses, six miles down the coast. The buildings were scattered along on a low slope just back from the shore of the sea — slight frame structures that had sometime been painted and that needed painting again. They were not beautiful, and they were not picturesque, for they were neither snug and domestic nor interestingly dilapidated. However, it was a delight to see the varied Southern fruits to be found in their orchards and gardens. Strawberries and early vegetables were already maturing; here and there were clumps of banana plants; and orange, lemon, lime, and olive trees abounded. Many of these trees had ripe fruit hanging on them, and I ate one of the oranges

plucked fresh from the bough on which it grew. How solid and juicy and delicious it was! A few of the later orange trees were full of odorous white blossoms, but on most of them the green new fruit was well formed, and there was often ripe fruit on the same trees. Near the shore was a scattering of palms, — cocoanut palms, date palms, and royal palms, — and in one spot grew a bunch of slender, rattling bamboos, probably fifty feet high. Yet all these tropical growths are importations, and you do not find them except in the neighborhood of habitations.

I saw and heard a good deal of the birds, and there were numerous butterflies and other insects. Sometimes I would happen on a little brown chameleon, and once I surprised a snake in the roadway — a small, green snake, so graceful and so delicately tinted it seemed the work of a master jeweller. In the pine woods the Bob Whites were calling, and occasionally several of them would start up at the sound of my footsteps and go skittering away with their noisy wings in great fright. It was evening by the time I returned to Miami, and the whippoorwills were crying about the village borders, and the thin cimeter of the new moon hung on the western horizon. A man I overtook, and in whose company I continued for a time, called my attention to the fact that the moon lay exactly level and one horn was as high as the other. He said according to the Indians this level moon meant rain.

They believe it holds water in that position, which will have to come out. But if the basin of the moon is tipped up sufficiently to allow its contents to escape, then it is of course empty, and the weather will be dry.

I had been somewhat disturbed on my walk by sociably inclined mosquitoes, and would have been troubled far more had it not been for multitudes of dragon-flies, or mosquito-hawks, as they are called in Florida, which were constantly darting about and doing their best to devour the pests. So many dragon-flies were engaged in this savage industry I concluded they must keep the mosquitoes pretty well subdued, and was quite ready to accept my landlord's statement that very few mosquitoes ever invaded Miami. But one of the men sitting in the hotel office overheard the landlord, and said sarcastically: "No, they're a curiosity in Miami. You'll find plenty of 'em, though, in the next town up the coast and the next town below."

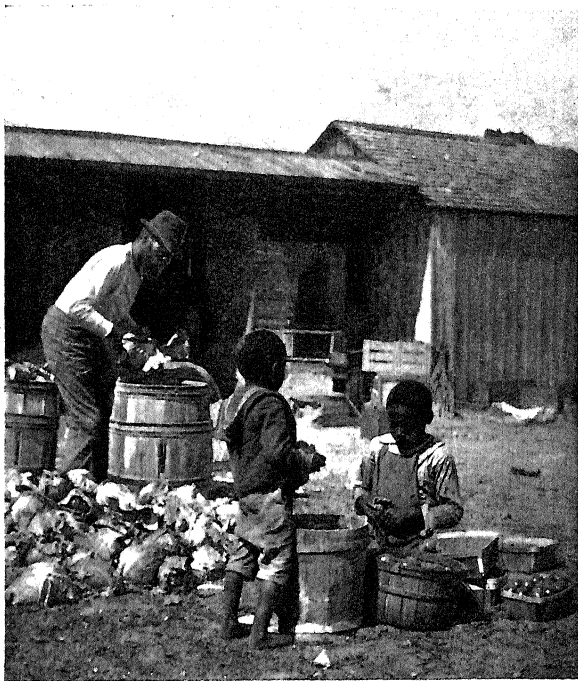
"That's so," added another man. "It's the same all over Florida—whatever place you go to the people'll swear they don't have any mosquitoes there; yet they'll acknowledge to their being all around."

"I've been driving sometimes," said the first man, "and in the swampy places the mosquitoes would light so thick on my horse you couldn't 'a' told what color it was; and I've been at farm-houses to dinner where there'd be so much of a smudge made to drive the

mosquitoes out that I couldn't see the persons sitting across the table from me. I don't know what we'd do without smudges during August and September."

"How do you make a smudge?" I asked.

"It's easy done," was the reply. "You only need to set fire to some rags that you have sprinkled with a little water so they'll burn slow. There's times when you'll see the nigger wenches washing clothes in



A Colored Truck Farmer

the yards and a line of smudge around 'em on the ground."

"I've heard," remarked the second man, "that over on the islands they have to put overalls on their mules to protect 'em from the mosquitoes."

"Those islands are terrible places for mosquitoes," affirmed the landlord. "I've known the farmers there to bring their hogs and chickens over to the mainland to keep the mosquitoes from killing 'em; and when a gang of men is at work there, setting out pineapples, one man 'll walk along to windward carryin' a smudge."

Another member of the company took up the subject and remarked: "I had some experience in a place I was stopping at one time. The mosquitoes were bound to follow a person everywhere, and I had a nigger along with me, and when I was goin' in to the hotel, he'd take a palmetto leaf and whisk 'em all off. Then he'd say, 'Ready!' and throw open the door and shout, 'Jump!' and in I'd go, and he'd slam the door after me. Same way about goin' to bed. The bed had a canopy netting over it, and when I was all fixed, my nigger'd brush me off and say, 'Ready — jump!' and I'd pop under the mosquito bars as lively as I could, so as not to give the mosquitoes any chance to follow me."

"Don't be afraid to tell the whole truth while you are about it, gentlemen," said a man who had come in a few minutes previous. "Now I've had my chamber windows so covered with mosquitoes that not a ray

of light could get in, and, as a result, I've slept through three days, thinking all the time it was night."

“I suppose every creature has a use,” observed the landlord in conclusion, “but Heaven only knows what ↘ mosquitoes were made for.”

↪ The most interesting of my excursions while at
↪ Miami was one up the river of the same name to the
↘ Everglades. The distance was only four miles, and
↪ there were boatmen who made a business of rowing those who wished to see the glades up and back at so much an hour. I fell into the hands of a navigator named Holt. He recommended himself to me by declaring that he was not like his competitors. “The other fellers will say they make the trip an’ get back in an hour or two, but they can’t do it. They want you think it will not cost much, so you give ’em the job; an’ then they do all they can to make the time long. I ain’t been here but little while, and I tell the trut’; and so the others, they don’t like me much. You have to look out aroun’ these parts. Your best frien’ ’ll cheat you in Miami; an’ I reckon the rest of the Florida people will do about the same. I tell you they are sharp — sharp as a brier. Every man got a scheme to ↘ work off on outsiders, an’ there mo’ money sunk in ↘ this state than in any other state in the Union.”

The Miami is a small tide-water stream, slow flowing and deep. The shores were, for the most part, lined with a thicket of mangrove trees, or rather bushes;

for they grew broad instead of high, and their tangled branches had nearly as many pendent roots as they had twigs. At frequent intervals along the banks were posted signs — cheap, thin boards, each proclaiming that,

“BILLINGS’S SHOES ARE SILENT SALESMEN.”

One could not help feeling that Billings merited severe and summary punishment for profaning nature on this quiet waterway with such an array of noisy signs about his silent shoes.

Back of the fringe of mangroves was forest, with an occasional opening where some settler had started a farm. Opposite each farm would be a wharf and a boat or two, and the river was evidently the chief highway of the dwellers on its shores. I came along just in time to see one farmer finish loading his boat with produce to take down to the town. He had potatoes, cabbages, poultry and eggs, tomatoes and several bunches of bananas; and the boat sank almost to the gunwales. He was a bushy-bearded, long-haired, half-wild-looking individual, but his conversation was marked by intelligence, and even a touch of culture. I mentioned this to Holt when we had left the pioneer behind. “Yes,” said my boatman, “but you can find better talkers than he is here. You ought to go over to the next farm across the river. The man there — he talks like a minister — he got just that slang, you know. My talk

is not good. I been a sailor many years, and the sailors on a ship, they are men of all nations piled together, an' pretty rough, an' they great cursers. I got so use'



A Planter ready to start for Market

to their talk I couldn't do nothing for long time but curse same like they did. That didn't suit me. I am a philosopher, an' my feelin's are delicate; an' I got thinkin' of it mo' an' mo', an' I stopped."

My philosophic and delicate companion pulled along upstream in silence for a while, and then he gave me his views with regard to the "niggers."

"I have no use for 'em," said he. "They're treacherous. If a white man got five cents, and the niggers have a good chance, they murder him for it. Yes, if they get a poor white man alone, they murder him for his clothes. They come to your face fine as can be, but you turn your back an' they cut your throat; though, of co'se, there's some are all right. I got heap of good idea, I've knocked about so long, an' I keep away from niggers. They have a nachul stink, you know; and if you stay with 'em all the time it apt to drive you crazy. They smell so bad you throw up your heart. Did you ever hear what Billy Bowlegs, the big chief of the Seminoles, says about niggers? He says God first made the Injun, then He made the white man, then He made the Injun's dog, and then He made the nigger; and I think that about the way of it. You laugh because he put their dog before the nigger, but an Injun dog ain't like common dogs. Their dogs know something an' can be trusted. Let me tell you. There was an Injun, not long ago, come to Miami, and he left his dog to take care of his things down by the shore of the river while he was in the town two days drunk. It was just a common yaller dog. I was with the Injun when he went back to where the dog was; an' the dog was half starved, but it hadn't touched a

thing, though there was crackers and meat within easy reach."

The day was one of warm and windless quiet. I could see fishes swimming lazily in the water; once a porpoise made a playful leap close beside the boat; there were mud-turtles sunning themselves on snags by the banks, and they would lift up inquisitive heads at our approach and slide off with a gentle plunk into the stream, out of sight. Grasshoppers and locusts were humming and birds were singing. The most noticeable songsters were the mocking-birds. "That's them," said Holt. "I can tell 'em because they sing so many different tunes. You be thinkin' they got all kind of birds' warble."

The stream narrowed as we went on until it became scarcely wide enough for Holt to use his oars. Finally we came to rapids where the water foamed in noisy shallows down a rough rocky channel. We got out, and Holt took off his shoes, rolled up his trousers, and thus accoutred, sometimes on shore, sometimes wading, he tugged the boat up the incline. The rise was short, for the Everglades are only about a score of feet above the sea-level. Soon we came out on the marshes. They spread away in a broad, sedge-grown level, broken here and there with wooded knolls and threaded with slender streams. We could have gone on a hundred miles and more and found nothing different. This immense tract of swamp has numerous

outlets on both sides of the peninsula, but they only carry off enough water to keep the shallow basin from becoming a lake. A project is broached for draining the Everglades of their surplus moisture by blasting the channels of the outlets deeper. Then the reclaimed land would be sold for farm purposes.

On the scattered swamp islands some hundreds of Seminole Indians make their homes. "They been



On the Borders of the Everglades

told so much lie," Holt explained, "that they ain't likin' the white man very well any mo', and they keep away by themselves in the Glades."

The Indians often visit Miami; and after I returned to the town, while I was still on the banks of the



An Indian Dugout

river, I saw two of their canoes coming down the stream with two men in each. The canoes were dug-outs, yet they were symmetrically and neatly fashioned, and were much better craft than I would have expected. Ordinarily they were propelled by poling, but the poles had a slight paddle blade on one end that could be used when necessary.

Holt had assured me that, "The Indians wear anything at all — they don't care what, if it is only fancy."

He was right. I never had seen human creatures more grotesque. Their brown legs and shanks were entirely bare, except for the flaps of their shirts; but their upper persons were considerably adorned. They had neckerchiefs and watch chains, and one wore a soldier's coat with brass buttons, while a comrade had the vest to match. Two had derby hats, one a straw hat, one a cap. The motley array of these children of the forest seemed to suggest that they had made way with a party of white enemies and divided the spoils.

They spent the rest of the day in town talking with the chaffing inhabitants, buying a few supplies, and perambulating about among the saloons. Finally they tottered down to the river, and in the palmetto scrub under the pines, made a fire and cooked some food. I tried to talk with them there, but they had few English words at command, and the interview was not very satisfactory. Their eyes were bloodshot with liquor, and the eldest of them lost his balance and keeled over into the brush. He lay for a while in drunken stupor, and then sat up with his head on his breast. The others, after eating, started for the village to secure another dram, but pretty soon one of them came running back and began calling to the seated Indian: "My frien'! Come here, come here!"

Not getting any response he went and helped his companion to his feet, and supported him on his way to the town. They were a melancholy spectacle.



SEMINOLE INDIANS FROM THE EVERGLADES

When such parties of Indians come to the towns of the whites one of their number always stays reasonably sober to guard their interests ; but as their visits usually extend over several days, and the Indians take turns in doing guard duty, every brave has a chance "to get beastly drunk and have a big time." At Miami they were said to have a special liking for an illicit brandy, the vigor of which was attested by its having received the title of "Chain lightning"; but as a rule their favorite liquors are corn or rye whiskey. They do not care for anything milder.

Whatever their failings, the Indians are absolutely trustworthy. "Sometimes an Injun will come into the hotel here," my landlord informed me, "and he says, 'Me hungry. Money, me no got 'im'; and he wants a dinner, and promises to pay in a certain number of moons. I may forget all about it, but the Injun don't. When the time comes, he pays. The only dishonest Injun I ever heard of was one that stole two hens from another Injun and swapped 'em for liquor; but he was found out, and he had to be the slave of the one he stole from for about half a year.

"They cultivate little patches of land on the Everglade knolls and raise corn and pumpkins and such things. When the corn gets ripe enough to eat, they have a green corn dance that lasts a whole day and night. Some Injuns have houses eight or ten feet square made of boards; but most have just palmetto

shacks.—huts shaped like a tent with a pole framework that is thatched with palmetto leaves. They like to move to new quarters often, and every time one of 'em does that he takes the whole shootin' ranch with him — pigs, chickens, and all. They bring a part of the things they raise to the towns and dispose of 'em ; but they have good guns, and they get much more money out of their hunting than they do out of their farm produce. Alligator and other hides fetch 'em the most, and they sell some venison and the feathers of the pink curlew, bittern, and heron. You'd be surprised to see the things they buy. Some of 'em invest in sewing-machines. They have quite a likin' for railroad conductor's caps, and they get the storekeepers to order 'em, and they are particular to have the word conductor on, and the gilt bands.

“They are very peaceful among themselves and with the whites, too. I know one of 'em came to my house before I kep' a hotel, and my wife was there alone. He had a little whiskey in him, and was boun' to talk, and she was kind of afraid of him. She was washin' clothes, and some of 'em was boilin' in the kittle. By and by she picked up a stick to lift out the clothes from the boilin' water and the Injun thought she was goin' to hit him, and he said, ‘Oh, me go!’ and he went. That was Charlie Cypress. They're all gettin' to have white names that they fix up for themselves — like Charlie Cypress and John Doctor

and Billy Stuart. Billy can write his name, only the way he writes it is 'Mr. Billy Mr. Stuart.'"

On leaving Miami I journeyed nearly two hundred miles northward and stopped at a village in the centre of the orange-growing country bordering the Indian River. I found lodging while there in a private house. The yard was aglow with the bloom of roses, lilies, and trumpet flowers, and the greatest lack of the house surroundings was turf. In this land of sand and almost uninterrupted summer you can scarcely find a respectable bit of lawn anywhere, and all the ornamental shrubs and the blossoms never quite succeed in banishing the sense of barrenness. Then, too, the dwellings, with their unsubstantial foundations, seem incomplete and shabbily constructed. Not a house in the village had a cellar. Some were on pillars of brick, but most on wooden posts or blocks. This underpinning tends to give way or settle as time goes on. In consequence, plaster room-walls would crack, and sheathing serves instead.

The village walks were shadowed by trees, but the trees were not large, and the streets were hot and dusty. The main thoroughfare, on which my lodging-place fronted, was seldom busy, and most of the time was wholly vacant; yet it was not as vacant as it would be later. "A month from now," said my landlady, "when the Northern people who've been spending the winter are all gone, the street will be like the cemetery out here — just so lonely."

That was putting it pretty strong, for the cemetery was as forlorn a spot as could well be imagined. It was on the village outskirts, and was a waste of sand and brush. Several family plots had been enclosed by fences of henyard wire, or shaky pickets, but the majority of the graves were in the open. A few had headstones. The rest had been marked, when new-made, by bits of board; but wood decays, and the lowly mounds had been soon effaced and their place forgotten, so that often when a fresh grave is dug some old coffin is encountered. My landlady started Bermuda grass on her plot. It, however, grew so tall and thick she rooted it all out and restored the plot to its original sand.

In the woods beyond the cemetery grew huckleberries and the wild scuppernong grapes. The grape-vines were pointed out to me by a negro, who told how sweet and good the fruit was, and he said he had a "tame" scuppernong vine in his garden which produced even finer fruit than the wild kind. The negro homes formed quite a settlement huddled in a hollow beyond the railroad. The surroundings were unkempt and the houses small. I looked into one of them. It was perhaps twenty feet square—a single room without sheathing or ceiling. The walls were papered with Harper's Bazaars and some great gaudy pictures from a Sunday-school lesson-roll. Most of the furniture seemed to be beds, and there was need for them. The



GRUBBING UP PALMETTO SCRUB

family was large, and so are nearly all colored families. Indeed, one of the white villagers affirmed that it wasn't possible to count the children in the "nigger-town" houses — "you have to measure 'em by the bushel."

The cultivated lands of the region lay on a strip of ridge along the coast. This ridge was only about a half-mile wide, and to the west it fell away into boggy "prairies" that were very "sour" and subject to floods from the St. Johns River. The orange trees were practically all killed off in the freeze of 1895, as they were everywhere in the state except at the extreme southern end. That was Florida's great disaster — a disaster from which it has never recovered. In other states you hear constant reference to the period "before the war," but in Florida they substitute the phrase "before the freeze." During the years immediately preceding, the orange industry had been greatly developed, the orchards were fast multiplying, and an immense amount of capital was invested. Then the thermometer dropped, the trees were blasted, and the Floridians' dreams of wealth received a doleful set-back.

That same cold winter the state experienced the only snowstorm that has occurred within the remembrance of the oldest inhabitant. The snow fell to the depth of two inches one night in all the northern counties, and the people opened astonished eyes in the morning

to find a white world. The negroes were particularly impressed, and instances are reported of colored chil-



Picking Oranges

dren who looked out of the window and exclaimed, "Somebody done scatter flour all over our front yard."

It is only in a few of the most favorably situated sections that orange raising has been resumed. On the Indian River the people were just beginning to get good crops again, though the trees were still small. Besides oranges, they grow all kinds of early vegetables, and my table fare was every day made attractive with newly maturing delicacies from the garden. I remember once some very fine string beans were served which my landlady said had grown so long that when she was getting them ready to cook she "had to break them in seven or eight halves."

My landlady had come from New York State in her youth, and I asked if she did not sometime intend to return. "No," was her response, "my husband is buried here, and no money could hire me to leave. This is an expensive place to live — why, milk is fifteen cents a quart, and is scarce at that, and all other rations cost high, too ; but it looks like the place where everything is just as you'd have it is a country where nobody show their nose in yet. When I first come here I didn't s'pose I'd stay a year. There wa'n't no one aroun' hardly but niggers then, and they was a shiftless lot, and spent half their time out in the palmetto scrub playing cards. I didn't dare walk nowhere for fear they'd jump out of the scrub and take my head off from me. But they've improved — and the climate can't be beat."

All the Florida dwellers were ready to swear by

their climate, though some would add that the state could boast of nothing else, and often they expressed surprise that any one should be tempted to come from other regions to settle and try to make a living.

While I was staying in the orange district my favorite walks were along the sea. A roadway bordered by palmettoes and live-oaks skirted the shore, and the oak limbs were hung with great fluffy trailings of Spanish moss that swayed softly with every breeze. Some of these pendants were at least ten feet long. One of the spots that attracted me especially was a low point thrusting well out into the bay, on which grew a thick palmetto grove. I could never pass this grove without stopping. Its seclusion was delightful. The shattered wreck of a little sail-boat lay on the beach, and the columnar tree trunks with their tufted tops, and the heat and silence, were such that I could easily fancy myself a Robinson Crusoe castaway.

In the vicinity of the ocean there was always a breeze as the day advanced, but the early morning was apt to be perfectly quiet, and then the glimmering sea was superlatively beautiful. The warm, clear sunlight, the mellow haze dimming the islands across the channel, the numerous ducks afloat on the water, the leaping of fish, and the bird songs of many kinds combined to give a sentiment as charmingly and languorously tropical as can be experienced anywhere on the mainland of our national domain.

II

WAY DOWN UPON THE SUWANEE RIVER



Washing in the Yard

IN that melodious and touching song of Stephen Foster's—"The Old Folks at Home"—which with its simple sweetness and the genuineness of its pathos has held such wide sway for more than a generation, we get the impression that the country bordering the Suwanee is a Southern paradise. Not that you find exactly this stated

in the words, but the longing of the negro singer for his old home seems to infer as much. However, as there is always something of paradise in the back-look to a happy childhood, whatever the environment may

have been, I suppose it was to be expected that I should find this Florida river in the reality quite different from my preconceived idea of it.

At the time I saw the Suwanee, in April, it was sullen and rapid; it had high, wooded banks, with considerable palmetto scrub in the underbrush; and now and then a live-oak heavily bearded with moss reached out over the stream. Pine forest covered much of the surrounding country, but this gave way to cypress in the swamps and to hardwoods along the watercourses. The river was stained with the washings of a recent flood. "There's high water ev'y big rain we have," one of the natives informed me; "an' I tell you this hyar river's a tiger when she start a-risin'. Sometimes she come up a foot an hour."

The village in which I was staying was mostly inhabited by negroes. It had no hotel, and occasional sojourners were accommodated at a Mr. Perky's, whose weatherworn, two-story house stood not far from the railway station. The house had a large yard enclosed by a picket fence somewhat patched and propped. Very little grass grew in the yard, and the earth was a good deal scratched up with hen holes. Just inside the gate on either side of the board walk that led up to the porch was a large cedar tree; and between the cedars and the house three or four orange trees had been started, but the frosts had nipped them every few years, compelling them each time to begin

again from the roots, so that they never got to be more than bushy clumps.

The only dwelling in the hamlet that could fairly be called commodious and comfortable was the home of Mr. Tushers, the chief business man of the region, and owner of most of the land. Mr. Tushers had turpentine works and a sawmill, and he was postmaster and the proprietor of the one store. His house fronted on the main road. Nearly all the houses strung along this highway were occupied by whites; but on the alleys and byways were rows of negro cabins — small, overcrowded, and shabby, compared with which the poorest dwellings of the whites were cheerful. An occasional cabin was shadowed by a china-berry tree, at that season full of sweet, purple bloom. As a rule, however, they were bare to sun and weather. Usually there was a tumbledown porch at the front. The cabins themselves were mere shells, with glassless window openings closed by board shutters. Inside, the rough studding of the walls was neither hidden by sheathing nor by lath and plaster, and the rooms were very sure to be grimy and unkempt and gloomy. Primitive fireplaces were still depended on for ordinary heating purposes, and it was the same in the homes of the whites. "Only rich people" could afford to have stoves throughout the house, yet even the poorest of both races in most parts of the South contrive to have a little stove for cooking.

Each Suwanee cabin had its accompanying garden patch, rudely fenced to keep the wandering hogs and cows from trespassing. The ground had been partially planted, and the collards, beans, etc., were in some instances ready for hoeing. The rent for a cabin and garden was from two to four dollars a month. Often the cabin dweller rented extra ground, on which he would raise such crops as corn, cotton, rice, sugar-cane, and sweet potatoes.

Much of the above information I gathered from Mr. Perky as we sat together on his "po'ch." Mr. Perky had been a soldier. So have practically all the older Southern men. But my landlord's war experiences had not been at all thrilling, or else the excitement was sapped from them by his drawling, husky-voiced telling of them. I did not gain a very high opinion of his patriotism. "I was in the war from beginnin' to eend," he said, "an' I use' to think sometimes about desertin'; but I reckoned a deserter wouldn't be thought much of at home. That's whar I was mistaken. The deserters had a chance to make money after they got back, and those that didn't desert come home pore, and so the deserters done showed up the best and was thought the most of."

He seemed to be haunted by a melancholy regret that he had not deserted. He was a tall, lank, cadaverous-featured man, and not very energetic. He liked to sit on his porch, and I think most Southern people

have the same liking. It seems to be a constitutional or climatic necessity. At any rate, ancestral usage from the remote past has put on the custom the seal of its approval. Mr. Perky would spend the major part of a day on his "po'ch," with entire ease of conscience. For a change he might go to the store and sit on the "po'ch" there an hour or so, or to the railway station to see a train come in and depart. Train time always found a waiting group of loiterers on the station platform. Without the stimulus of this mild excitement the sluggish village life would very likely have come to a complete stop. It was an especial pleasure to the negroes. "If thar was a train through hyar every half-hour, the darkeys 'd be thar to see it," declared Mr. Perky's daughter, Nan. "They stan' thar an' look an' look, like they hadn't never seen a train befo'." The niggers aroun' hyar are curiosities, they certainly are."

Nan was the village belle. I had caught a glimpse of her at the door when I first entered the gate in search of lodging, but she had promptly disappeared to improve her raiment. Now she had come out again to the porch.

"This is a right pretty day," said she.

I assented.

"Is your home out North?" she inquired; but before I could reply she caught sight of two little colored boys who were passing, and called out, "Jerry! Abraham!"

The boys stopped. "Yes, ma'am," they said.

"I want yo'."

The boys hastened into the yard, and she continued: "I reckon thar's some aigs under the house. Yo' go under and see."

The house was set on blocks eighteen or twenty inches from the ground in the usual Southern way, and in the seclusion beneath the dwelling the hens often made their nests. "Maw, she go under thar sometimes and crawl aroun' for aigs," explained Nan, "but mostly we get these hyar boys to do it. That Jerry is a slick duck, an' he's boun' to find 'em if thar are any."

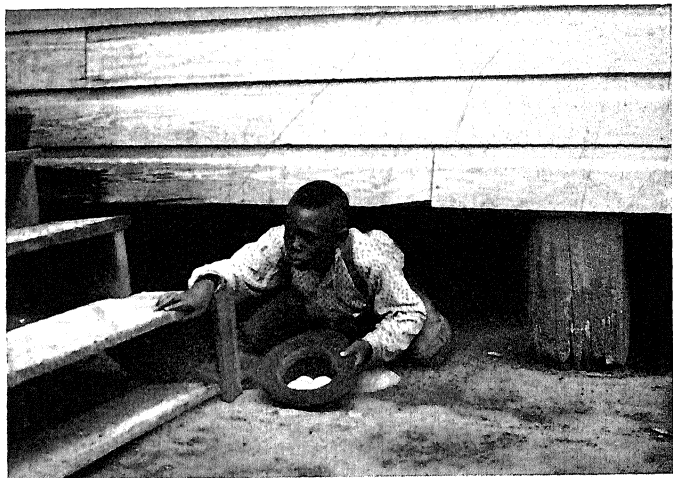
The search to-day ended in the boys coming forth with their hats full. They counted up twenty-seven eggs from a single nest. Miss Perky carried the eggs into the house and returned with a plate of food left over from dinner, and the boys seated themselves on the back steps to eat it. "They'll do anything if you give them something to eat," she said.

Nan's "maw" came out as the boys were finishing, and said she reckoned the nest they had found wasn't the only one on the place. That seemed quite likely, for the hens rambled about very much as they pleased. Boxes had been nailed up against the smokehouse for them to lay in, but they neglected those and deposited their eggs beneath the buildings, or in the crotches of a big tree in the back yard, or even in the house rooms, and one hen liked to lay up under the roof of the back

porch where some missing sheathing boards of the ceiling gave access to several dark crannies.

"Abraham," said Mrs. Perky, "yo' go to the station and ask the station-master will he please bring his little ladder and look if there are any aigs over the po'ch hyar, if he can spare the time."

The station-master soon appeared with his little ladder, made a leisurely search, and went back to his work. Mrs. Perky had meanwhile set the colored boys to chopping wood. The supply ready for burn-



A Successful Search for Eggs

ing was entirely exhausted, but as this was the state of things about thrice daily, there was no undue alarm.

The pile of uncut wood was by no means large. It was replenished from time to time, when the need grew insistent, by a load from the forest. Mr. Perky complained that he had to go nearly two miles for his forest wood, and said it was "gettin' skace." He owned no woodland; but dead trees, standing or fallen, are common property, and it was with these that he renewed the back yard pile. To reduce the wood to proper length for use, an axe was employed—never a saw—and it was customary to cut just enough for the immediate wants of the next few hours.

The colored people were rather less forehanded than the whites with their wood. They were apt to "tote" it in from the forest a stick at a time, the stick being as large as the bearer could comfortably shoulder. Probably no class of people with wood for the taking suffer as the negroes do in winter. They simply will not get enough to keep themselves warm, and their thin-walled houses are far from easy to heat in really sharp weather. Many a chill day, were you to look inside their huts, you would find only a little handful of fire flickering in the fireplace, and the whole family huddling about it, shivering. They may even sleep around the fire. On cold nights they help themselves to sticks from the woodpiles of their white neighbors, and sometimes they will burn a board of the cabin floor, thrusting an end into the fire and pushing the rest in gradually as the flames eat it away.

Most of the toting of wood from the forest for the negro cabins falls to the lot of the women, and I recall seeing one stout old negress, who lived near the Perkys, bringing in wood thus a number of times every day. She did her own chopping, and as she gained her livelihood by taking in washing, she not only had to chop enough for her indoor fires, but also for an outdoor fire that she kept burning pretty constantly. Washing in the yard is almost universal in the South, and neighboring every house is a big black kettle in which water is heated. The colored woman of whom I have spoken, after boiling the clothes in the kettle, transferred them to some tubs on her porch, and later hung them on her fence to dry. While she worked she smoked a long-stemmed pipe. She was disposed to be critical of her wages, and mentioned doing a wash for a white family of eight persons for twenty-five cents a week.

After Abraham and Jerry had hacked away at the Perkys' woodpile for a half-hour or so I went for a walk with them. Mrs. Perky had rewarded each with a chew of tobacco. "I been chewin' 'bacca ever since I high enough to know it," confided Jerry. "Us likes it."

I made some derogatory remark about the habit, and Abraham asked soberly, "Is chewin' against the law in yo' country, mister?"

"Oh, no!" said I.

"Well, I spec smokin' is, ain't it, Cap.?" he suggested.

The boys often addressed me by this military abbreviation. They took considerable pride in being my companions, and were inclined to be abusive to others less favored. We met a little girl they called George-ann with a pail of water poised on her head. She intimated to Abraham that he was wanted at home, but he disdained her. "The idee; you got a bucket o' water on yo' haid, and talkin' to me!"

Just then his mother appeared on the scene and his haughtiness evaporated. I told her I was going to the woods, and that I would be glad to have the boys go with me.

"Sure God is!" she exclaimed. "I doan' see what yo' want wid dem raggedy, good-for-nothin' boys. Dey look like de berry debbil!"

Their appearance was not at all suggestive of the satanic to me, and I found them interesting and entertaining. They kept up a continual chatter that consisted largely of bickering disputes between themselves. They seemed to enjoy argument, and there were few subjects that did not yield them a chance to differ. For instance, take the mosquitoes. They swarmed everywhere in the vicinity of the Suwanee. You could not escape them in the forest, or in the village, or in the homes, and they put in twenty-four hours a day persecuting humanity. Everybody had to keep up



Water from the Village Pump

a constant fight. While I was passing one of the negro cabins with the boys a shutter creaked and an aged negress poked her head out of a window aperture. She said the mosquitoes were so bad she had

closed her house up tight and was sitting in the dark.

"Look at de skeeters aroun' me," remarked Abraham. "Dey done pester me so I wish dey all git in a pile, an' den I could cut 'em up wid a hatchet or somepin'!"

"Dese yere skeeters bite anybody," Jerry commented.

"Ehh, uhh!" grunted Abraham in disapproval.

"Yes, dey will!"

"Ehh, uhh!"

"Dey will, yo' know dey will, Abwaham."

"Will dey bite de Lord?"

"No."

"Den dey won't bite *anybody*."

"But de Lord doan' walk down yere," was Jerry's excuse. "Dey cain't meet up wid de Lord to bite him if he doan' walk down yere."

The boys spoke of a ball there was to be in the village soon, and they said that they could dance, though Jerry conceded that his companion was the more expert. "He limber and he a good dancer," said Jerry.

I tried to get Abraham to show his skill, but he would only go through a few steps of two dances, one of which he called "Pop Open," and the other "Pull the Mule."

The sky was dull and threatening, and once we heard distant thunder, or, as the boys expressed it,

"a grass-wagon rolling over a bridge." They had a good many imaginative notions of that sort. Jerry took particular pains to point out to Abraham trees in the pine woods which he asserted were "done swole up—de heart is daid"; and he called attention to the ant heaps and said: "If dose red ants sting you, dey give you de fever. One done stung me on dis yere toe nex' de big toe, an' dat toe got so sore I couldn't hardly walk."

My companions were quick to recognize birds and their songs, and they pointed out to me mocking-birds, sparrows, "loggerheads," thrushes, redbirds, and "yallerhammers." They were interested in the berry bushes we passed, and spoke with especial enthusiasm of "jew" berries, which they said "got ripe 'bout de time de jew fall on 'em a li'l'."

"You like them, do you?" I asked.

"No, sah," Abraham responded. "I doan' like 'em, I loves 'em. But de bes' berry is de sparkle berry—m-m, ah, ah, o-o! And yo' c'n make wine out of sparkle berries. Is you ever eat dem?"

Scattered all through the woods were low, delicate lilies, nearly white, but with tinges of purple. The boys picked some of these, and some "shame-brier," and some cowslips which they called buttercups, and some lupines which they called "popple," a name they explained by saying that the pods when crushed would go "pop-pop."

"We pick all kind of flowers when school keep," remarked Jerry, "an' we tie 'em up aroun' on de schoolroom walls, and dey suttonly do look han'some."

"Can you read?" I inquired.

"I read li'l' bit. Dis yere boy" (indicating Abraham) "he c'n read a lot. Me 'n' him are jus' about as ole, but he been to school de mostest. We have school four month ev'y year. De las' teacher we had was name Johnson. He was a ba-ad man. He sholy was. He was always beatin'. He beat you if yo' beat one of de gals when we out doors playin'; an' it doan' make no dif'runce if de gal jump on yo' first. He was a ba-ad man."

On our way back we called at the schoolhouse. It stood lonely in the thin woods on the outermost borders of the village—a brown, rickety barn of a structure that looked utterly uncared for and abandoned. I could have wept when I saw its melancholy interior—the shaky floor, the glassless window openings closed by board shutters, the cracks in the walls and roof, and the broken benches and desks. As in the negro cabins, there was no plastering or sheathing or ceiling. In one corner was a small blackboard, and near this a rude table for the teacher, that was fenced in with a slight railing. Abraham sat on the teacher's table and dangled his heels. Jerry hunted for bits of chalk to use on the blackboard and walls. Two or three smaller children wandered in while we were

there, and walked about very quietly until one of them suddenly disappeared and set up a frightened yelling. I ran to learn the cause of the trouble, and found the youngster had stepped on a broken board and fallen halfway through the floor. We rescued



The Colored People's Schoolhouse

him, and Jerry put his hands over the little fellow's mouth and hushed his outcries. This incident only served to add to the pathos of the situation—such discomforts and so few advantages! I could not fancy that the children who attended school here could gather more than the merest crumbs of an education.

Not far away, in the brushy borders of the "piney woods," was the negro graveyard. A few bits of boards were set up at the head and foot of the newest graves, but the rest were wholly unmarked, and time had obliterated all signs of where they had been. As we approached we saw a dog among the graves gnawing a bone, and the effect was gruesome, though the bone was not human.

"My paw buried thar," said Jerry, and then, pointing to Abraham, he added, "Dis boy paw ain' buried yet."

I wondered, as I turned away, whether this colored schoolhouse and graveyard could be at all typical. Later experience leads me to think they are counterparts of what would be found in a great many communities. The negroes are semi-outcasts. They get only the dregs. But then, the Southern country as a whole is poor, and the advantages the white people can provide for themselves are apt to be very meagre.

When I returned to the Perkys' it was supper-time; but supper was not ready. The smoke-house key was lost, and everybody was hunting for it—Mr. Perky, Mrs. Perky, Nan, and Mr. Swazey, the boarder. They kept on ransacking the premises until Mrs. Perky sat down exhausted, and said: "Well, I wouldn't hunt any more if I was never to eat another piece of meat in my life. Mr. Perky, I wish yo' would buy a little bacon at the store—enough for to-night. It's likely I c'n

find the key to-morrow. I put that thar key on the shelf in yon closet this noon, an' I shet the do' an' lef' it thar and ain' teched it since, an' yet hit's gone clean away. Well, I'm plumb tired out an' nervous. Nan, you'll have to get the supper;" and Mrs. Perky took another dip of snuff.

Mrs. Perky and her snuff were never long separated. She kept it in a tin spice box and dipped with a twig of black-gum six or eight inches long. She kept a supply of these little twigs on hand. When in use one end of the twig was chewed into a brushy swab. This end she would rub about in the snuff-box and then thrust in her mouth and let it stay there with the other end protruding. She did very little masticating, the process consisting chiefly in holding the snuff in her mouth and gently absorbing it.

"I never dipped until after I was married," said she, "and not then until I begun to have dreadful tooth-aches. Mr. Perky's folks was all great tobacco worms, an' they tell me I boun' to lose all my teeth if I don't dip snuff. So I learnt; and now when I get worried up over something, I dip many a time when I don't know it or think anything about it."

In preparation for supper we men folks resorted to the back porch and washed our hands and faces in a tin basin kept there on a shelf which extended between two of the porch posts. We threw the waste water out into the yard. Our immediate source of supply

was a bucket close at hand, and this was filled as occasion demanded from a cistern in the yard, that gathered the drainage of the roof by a system of troughs.

We ate in a rough little room next the still smaller and rougher "cook room." Two long benches flanked the table and served as seats for the Perkys and their boarder, but a chair was set at the head of the table for me. We had bacon, rice, canned tomatoes, biscuit, corn bread, and coffee; and, with minor variations, this was the fare at every meal. The corn bread, also called hoe-cake, was a soggy, flat, round cake, a foot across and an inch thick, baked on a griddle. There was no butter, but you could use bacon grease on the biscuit and corn bread, or you could dip on the stewed tomatoes. Butter was always scarce in the winter and early spring.

"You see the cows have to look for themselves in winter," explained Mr. Perky, "and they are obleege to ramp aroun' right smart to get enough to live on. We got too many cows for this hyar range, anyway. In the spring we burn the old grass off all through the woods, and pretty soon the new grass begin to come. It's right sweet, and the cows loves it dearly. They do better then, and we drive 'em up an' milk 'em and have milk and butter to use till fall. Some people keep up two or three cows through the winter, but they only feed 'em corn shucks and such like, and the little milk they give don't hardly pay for foolin' with 'em."

The skim milk not consumed by the household was fed to the hogs and chickens. Every family had its herd of razorbacks, often fifty or seventy-five of them. During the day they roamed the woods, and all through the forest I saw the little holes they had torn in their search for roots and worms. With the approach of evening they returned to the house gate for a feast of slops, and after disposing of these and nosing about the vicinity in search of more morsels, the bevy of porkers would camp down in a bunch near the house yard fence for the night. These native black razorbacks seemed to be quite successful in picking up a woodland livelihood, but they never succeeded in filling out their lean sides.

"I was layin' for to have chicken for Sunday dinner to-morrow," remarked Nan.

"I reckon then the preacher's goin' to be hyar to dinner," said Mr. Swazey.

"No," replied Nan, "he ain't; not that I've heard of."

"A preacher don't think he's treated right if he goes visitin', an' don't get chicken," was Mr. Swazey's comment.

"Yes, preachers shorely do love chicken," said Nan, "and so do I; but I cain't have chicken to-morrow. I been huntin' all roun' befo' supper for that ole Betsey hen, an' I couldn't find her."

"What hen is that?" I asked.

"Who? The ole Betsey hen? Hit's one pa got of a nigger name of Betsey. She owed him a quarter, an' that was the only way he could get his pay. But that hen has been brought up with niggers, and hit seem like she boun' to run away to get with them all the time. I got tired of that, an' I'm goin' to put her in the pot. I'll take her head off, and then I reckon she'll stay somewhar."

"Well, don't forget to fasten up the henhouse to-night," cautioned Mrs. Perky.

"What do you fasten it for?" I inquired.

"Hit's the only way to have any chickens when thar's niggers aroun'," was Mrs. Perky's response.

"God pity the chicken coop the niggers get into at night," remarked Mr. Swazey, fervently.

"Sometimes they'll put a grain of corn on a fish-hook and ketch our hens in the daytime," said Mrs. Perky. "I tell you they're shrewd."

When we finished eating and I looked out of the door I noticed that mosquito fires had been kindled in many of the village yards to draw the insects from the dwellings. While I was watching the leaping flames of these picturesque little bonfires lighting up fitfully the neighboring house walls, I heard Nan calling excitedly: "Mr. Swazey, yo' got yo' pistol? Come shoot this dog! He been a-stealin' of our aigs what the hens lay under the house!"

We all hastened to the back porch.



The Jew's-harp

"I don't see no dog," said Mr. Swazey, pistol in hand, peering into the darkness. "He done got his aigs an' gone with 'em."

"No," said Nan, "thar he is, sneakin' along by the fence."

"Yo' better not shoot much off that away," observed Mrs. Perky. "Yo'll hit a nigger."

"Good thing if I did — thar's too many 'of 'em," grumbled Mr. Swazey.

Then followed a sharp report and a flash of fire, but we saw the dog leap the fence and disappear. "I couldn't get a good aim," was Mr. Swazey's excuse. "Hit was too dark."

"I know what I'm a-goin' to do," Nan said decidedly. "I been pestered with them nigger dogs eatin' our aigs long enough. I'm goin' to the store an' get some Rough on Rats, an' poison 'em."

"That's right," commented Mr. Swazey. "Don't yo' remember how ole man Dustan one time poison a liver an' kill mighty nigh all the dogs aroun'?"

Nan started after the poison, and her father and mother went into the house. "Well," said Mr. Swazey, "I mus' put this hyar pistol back in my room. I ain't one of them that carry a gun regular in their hip pocket. I don't believe in it. Hit makes too much devilment. I recollect hearin' a preacher preach wunst on that subject, an' he say he reckon thar was enough pistols right thar in the chu'ch that minute to reach clear acrost it, if they was to lay 'em down eend to eend, and I s'pose thar was. But carryin' wepons ain't so common as hit use' to be. I had jus' one spell of it myself. I was only a boy then, an' thar was a man work with me what pester me

continual. He kep' shootin' his mouth off till I was plumb distracted, an' one day when I couldn't stan' hit no longer I cussed him for ev'ythin' I could think of. I always had kep' quiet befo', and that cussin' skeer him. He tu'n so red hit look like if you scratch him with a pin he 'bleeged to bleed to death. I'd been carryin' my pistol an' projeckin' for to kill that man so long I make up my min' I do the job now ve'y soon. But I had a friend, and he see how things was, and he have a talk with the man; and my friend he say to me afterward that the man agree thar be no mo' trouble. That make all the diffrence in the worl' to me. Hit was jus' like yo' pick up this house an' set it off of me."

At the close of Mr. Swazey's reminiscence we went indoors. Nan had returned with a supply of poison, and was preparing for business. First she imprisoned the cat. "She's a nachul good mouser," said Nan, "and we don't want to lose her; and we don't want to lose Dunk either," she continued, as she got out the clothes-line and fastened it around the neck of the family dog.

Dunk was a big, sober, long-legged hound, and he looked ashamed and disconcerted. "This hyar dog ain't never been tied up at night befo'," explained Miss Perky, "an' he don't know what to make of it. Did yo' ever hear the sayin' that if yo' want a dog that ain't yourn to stay with you, he'll stay if you cut off a little

hair from the tip end of his tail an' put it under your doorstep? Another way to keep a dog that ain't yourn is to take a piece of meat an' rub it on the bottom of his foot."

The poisoned meat was finally put out in the yard, and we all gathered in the best room. This room had a bed in it, a few chairs, a small table, a battered bureau, and a sewing-machine. There was no carpet and there were no rugs. The sheathed walls had been papered, and the paper had cracked from ceiling to floor at almost every joint of the boards. Several hats adorned the walls, and a number of unframed pictures were fastened up with pins. Three of these pictures were big, gaudy circus posters, and another a plug tobacco advertisement. The room had a fireplace, but the weather was too warm for a fire, and the opening was shut from sight by a fireboard that was beautified with a pasting of colored pictures. Some of the pictures were fashion plates, some of them gay groups of turnips, beets, etc., from seed catalogues, while the centrepiece was a poster proclaiming the merits of a "Home Chill Cure—never Fails."

On the mantel was a tall clock. "I bought that twenty years ago," said Mr. Perky. "Hit's an eight day clock; but hit don't run eight days now. The spring air a-gettin' played out, and I'm 'bleeged to wind hit twicet a week, or it would go dead."

Mrs. Perky took down from the mantel some photo-

graphs, and told me all about each person represented. One was a photograph of herself, and she wanted to know if I thought it "favored any." She said she and Nan had ordered three enlargements from an agent, and were going to have them framed. Mr. Perky remarked that he didn't see what they wanted to buy so many pictures for; but his wife and daughter promptly retorted, "No, of co'se yo' don't care nothin' at all how the house looks."

Mr. Perky was glad to change the subject, and he got up and rubbed his hands and face with some spirits of turpentine from a bottle on the bureau. "I'm goin' to see if that won't keep these hyar mosquitoes off," he explained. "I c'n keep 'em off by smokin', but it's kind o' hard to keep pullin' at yo' pipe all the time."

"Don't yo' reckon these bald-headed fellers has to keep their hats on, when the mosquitoes are aroun' like they are now, so they won't get e't up by 'em?" asked Mr. Swazey.

"They bite me through my shoes," Nan declared. "I've heard tell thar'll come a hundred for every one yo' kill," she continued, "an' hit look like to me that was a true saying."

"Well," said Mr. Perky, "I was over to Skacegrease, yesterday was a week ago, and they said the mosquitoes was so numerous thar an' they killed so many they had to haul 'em off in wheelbarrows."

"I wouldn't be surprise," commented Mr. Swazey.

"They say hit's these hyar wiggletails make mosquitoes, an' yo' know thar's a big swamp over 'near Skacegrease whar the water's all full o' them wiggletails."

Mr. Perky did not find his application of turpentine very effective, and he presently resumed smoking. Every few moments he would spit in the direction of the fireplace. Mrs. Perky had her snuff dip protruding from her mouth, and she also had a surplus of saliva, but disposed of it behind the fireboard. "These mosquitoes make me wish *I* smoked again," said she. "I use' to smoke equal to Mr. Perky. After he was through with his ole pipe at night I'd clean it out and use it myself. But I give that up, an' I only smoke now when I have a cold. It opens up your head to smoke a cheroot when yo' have a bad cold."

"I wouldn't smoke," Nan affirmed, "but I love to see an ole lady settin' 'round the corner smokin'."

"My boys smoke cigarettes," mused Mrs. Perky. "I've tried to get 'em to use pipes, but they won't. They've all moved away now, an' it leaves us right lonesome, though they were troubles, too, sometimes. Them boys would rather see a chicken-fight than eat when they was hungry, and they were forever buyin' an' swappin' to get a rooster that'd whip all the other roosters. I didn't like to have our roosters fight, they'd get bunged up so, and once when the boys brought home our rooster dead I could 'a' whipped the last one of 'em."

The evening slipped away, and retiring time came. I quailed a little when I entered my sleeping room and found it humming full of mosquitoes like a big beehive. The creatures sang and bit all night, nor could I contrive any scheme to get away from them, short of suffocating myself with the bedclothes. When I came downstairs at six o'clock the next morning all the family were stirring except Nan, whose mother was at the young lady's chamber door urging her to come forth and help about breakfast. Nan was reluctant. She said she had got supper the night before, and so didn't think she ought to be asked to help with breakfast. Mrs. Perky returned to the cook room. I looked out on the yard from the back porch. "Where are your dead dogs?" I inquired.

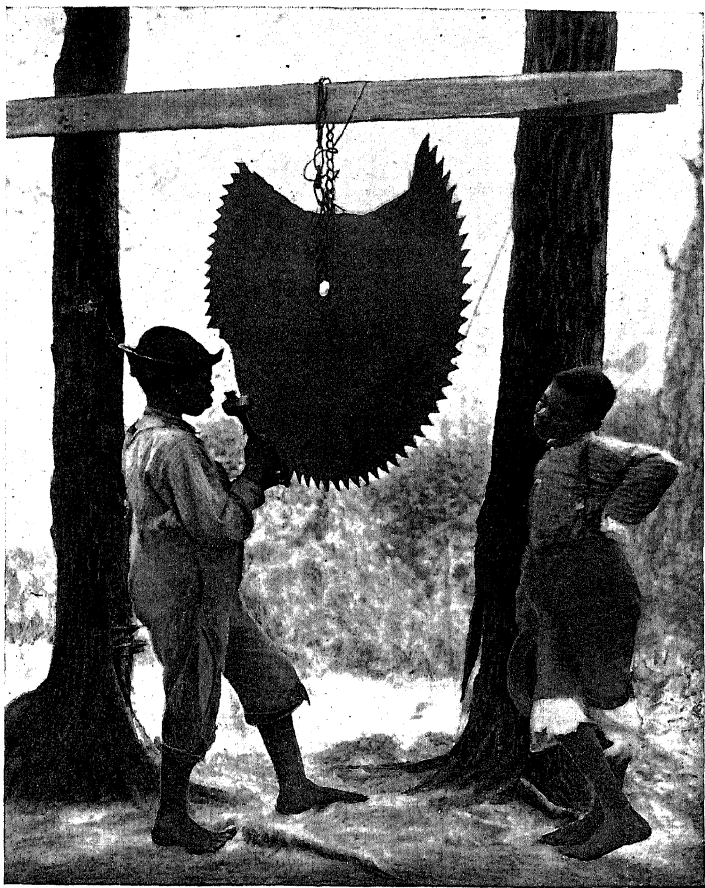
"I reckon Nan didn't put that thar poison out early enough las' night," replied Mrs. Perky. "I jus' went out to take it in an' I foun' that ole Betsey hen a-gnawin' at it."

The old Betsey hen did not die from the effects of the poison. She was a hardy, adventurous creature, and when we were disturbed during breakfast by a great clatter from the cook room, Nan ran out and called back: "It's that ole Betsey hen. A little mo' an' she'd have laid a aig in the frying pan."

I spent most of the morning on the front porch. The weather was hot and still, like a windless day of our Northern midsummer. The sun shone, the birds

sang, the flies buzzed, the mosquitoes hovered about familiarly, the cow bells gently tinkled in the forest, and the village poultry crowed and cackled. Not far away, in the middle of the street, was an iron pump, and its handle was never long idle. Horses were driven up to drink from the trough, the cows came one or two at a time, and the hogs visited a waste pool that formed on the ground below. Many a bucketful for home use was carried away by both whites and blacks, and every little while some colored man or youth would drink by putting his mouth down to the spout, or perhaps he would fill his felt hat and drink from that.

On my walk, the day before, Jerry and Abraham had pointed out to me the colored people's "chu'ch-house"—a plain, barnlike structure originally put up for a "bar-room." It stood in the woods on the river bank, and the stream flowed dark and swift and deep not a stone's throw away. In front, suspended between two trees, was "the bell,"—a great, broken circular saw. On one of the two trees hung a short iron bludgeon which served as a clapper. Some man of the congregation rang the bell for church, and the boys rang it for Sunday-school. I had planned to attend service at this colored church-house; but I listened in vain for the bell, and when, toward noon, I walked down to the river, I found the preaching in full progress.



THE BELL-RINGERS

The interior of the edifice consisted of a single, big, bare room with a floor of unplanned and unmatched boards, and naught overhead but the roof, through the crevices of which I could see bits of sky. The windows had disappeared, but heavy wooden shutters were hinged at the openings, and could be swung back to admit the light when the room was in use. All the seats, including one behind the pulpit, were benches, some of them broken, and most of them backless. The pulpit was on a low platform. It was hardly more than a shelf covered with cloth. There were two preachers, one seated on the platform bench, the other exhorting. Three of the sisters sat along the right hand wall and four of the brethren sat along the left hand wall, and that was the congregation.

The exhorter was a little man with a long mustache. All of his front teeth were gone, and their absence was rather impressive, for he opened his mouth very wide. To add fervor to his religious eloquence, he assumed a voice so hoarse and violent that his words were scarcely distinguishable. He had a rhythmic way of expelling four or five words in an explosive shout, and then drawing in his breath with a sudden rasping snort. This kind of delivery he continued all through, except when he broke into a wail, or sang a line of a hymn. He looked and acted like a wild man. Striding back and forth across the platform, he waved his arms and distorted his body. Sometimes he crouched

low behind the pulpit almost out of sight. Again he leaned far back and addressed God in heaven, but always in tones throbbing with hoarse frenzy.

The chanted medley of his discourse seemed to be a kind of vision — a vision of a rich man, a poor man, a lame man, a bond man, etc. “I see a ole man — *snort* — he walk wid a cane — *snort* — I see a judgment day — *snort* — hit make no difference — *snort* — rich or poor — *snort* — lame or blin’ — *snort* — hit’s God’s judgment day — *snort* — dese yere ole chu’ch hypocrites — *snort* — dey git deir pay — *snort* — I see a li’l’ wheel — *snort* — hit’s a-turnin’ — *snort* — I see a big wheel —” and he whirled his hands, and went on to explain that the little wheel was turning inside of the big wheel ; but what the significance of the wheels was I did not understand.

The audience supplemented the preaching with an occasional “Amen,” “Glory be,” “Yes, indeed,” and sometimes by the humming of portions of hymns. The main theme of the exhorter was man’s lost and miserable condition, but toward the close the strain became joyously ecstatic, and with a final, “I’m goin’ to Jesus now,” he sank back on to the bench. Instantly the other preacher was up, starting a negro melody, “David bear on yo’ heart,” in which every one joined vigorously. The rest of the service consisted of one or two short addresses, a long prayer, and more singing.

All the time the worshippers had to defend themselves from the swarming mosquitoes. Some used palm-leaf fans, some wafted their handkerchiefs, and one man tied his handkerchief over his head.

Just before we were dismissed the preacher of the day announced that, "In two weeks hit'll be communion, an' we got to do somepin, 'caze dar ain' no money to buy de wine wid."

Thus urged, two of the colored men contributed five cents each, and I handed in a quarter. My munificence was apparently unprecedented, for the elder who took my coin offered to give me back change.

One of the ministers said he would preach there that night "at early candle lightin'," and added, "Yo' needn't make no great blowout about it, but be sho to come."

When the benediction had been pronounced, the oldest of the sisters broke into a song and shook hands with the other women and the preachers. I mentioned to this aged sister as we passed out that I had not heard the bell ring that morning for service.

"Dey say dey knock de bell twice," was her response, "but I didn't hear it no mo' dan you did, an' I lives close by in de quarters."

To the colored people their huddle of cabins was still "the quarters," the same as in slave times. At the dinner table that noon Mr. Swazey told me I ought to be on hand when the niggers had a revival.

"Of all the shoutin' an' rarin' an' tearin' an' cuttin' up, they have it," said he; "an' thar's meetin's night an' day for two or three weeks."

Our Sunday dinner was more elaborate than our week-day meals; for we had extras in the shape of a platter of boiled cabbage, a peach pie, a loaf of cake, and a tumbler of tasteless manufactured jelly. Mrs. Perky, as she took a second helping of cabbage and dipped the pork grease over her hot biscuit, complained of not feeling well, and said her health hadn't been really good in a long time. She couldn't understand what the matter was.

"I think maw need a change," observed Nan. "She ought to go on one of these hyar railroad scurgions."

"Yo' certainly have a hearty appetite, Mis' Perky," suggested Mr. Swazey.

"I'd be as fat as a mole if it was eatin' made a person fat," the lady replied; "but my stomach ain't right. I been takin' diff'rent kinds o' medicine, an' they don't none of 'em help me. Yesterday, in the store, they tol' me they got a new medicine they like me to try, an' I reckon I will."

After the dinner things had been cleared away we gathered on the porch, Mr. Perky and Mr. Swazey with their pipes and Mrs. Perky with her snuff stick. Nan had put on her sunbonnet and gone down to the woods by the river with a knife to get a "wad" of

sweet-gum. She returned chewing, and when her jaws became tired she stuck the gum on a porch post ready for future use.

Mrs. Perky gave me a turkey wing with which to combat the mosquitoes. "Hit 'pears to me," said Mr. Swazey, "that thar wing belong to the turkey I shot a year ago. He was a big one, I tell you — weighed sixteen pound dressed, and had a beard ten inches long."

"We have oodles of turkeys and other wild game in these hyar woods," was Mrs. Perky's comment. "I reckon you'd find deer within five or six mile."

Just then a short, rotund, elderly man, whom my companions addressed as "Uncle Rob," came in at the gate. He was a man of many excellencies, Mr. Swazey informed me in an aside, "though he's drunk enough whiskey to run the Suwanee River a mile. Thar ain't no one aroun' hyar drunk mo' whiskey than Uncle Rob, unless hit is the alligator boy."

"Who is he?" said I.

"He's a white man about my age," Mr. Swazey replied. "His head is human, but the rest of him some resembles a 'gator. His lower half ain't fully developed, and they say he's got thirteen ribs on one side an' only four on the other."

Uncle Rob had been urged to have a chair, but he said it suited him better to sit on the steps. "I ain't comfortable in no chair 't ever was made," he declared,

and then turning toward Nan he continued, "Hit's been a long time since I set down an' tol' you a love story, Nan."

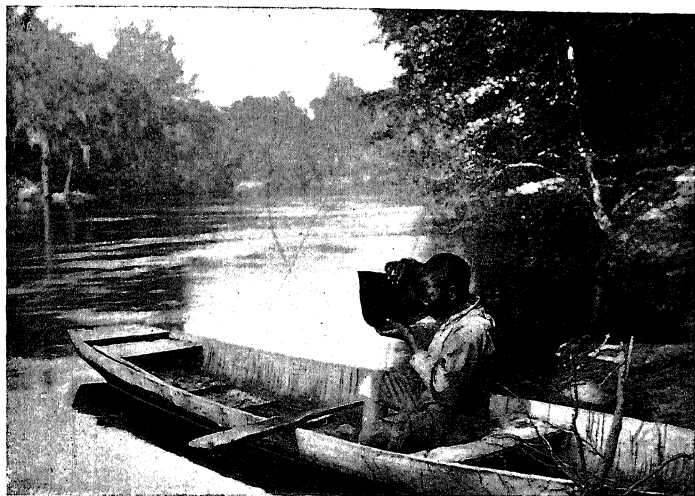
"Ho! thar ain't no chance for you, Uncle Rob," exclaimed Mr. Swazey. "Ole man Hill been aroun'."

"Yes," said Mrs. Perky, "that's a fact. Ole man Hill lost his wife less'n a year ago, but he's bought a new hat an' he try to look as young as he can, an' he been aroun' to see Nan."

Thereupon they all began chaffing Nan, who played at shyness and tried to blush, but she evidently did not find the subject uninteresting. Presently Mrs. Perky mentioned that the day before she and several other village women had cleaned the schoolroom in preparation for a religious service to be held that afternoon. "We drug the stove into the closet at the back," said she, "and when we got through our work an' all the dirt an' rubbish was out of the room, hit look ve'y well. Yo'll go to the meetin' to-day, won't yo', Uncle Rob?"

"I don't think!" responded that individual, blowing his nose through his fingers. "I ain't no infidale, but I don't take any stock in sky pilots. If ever the ole boy got after me hit was one night I slep' with a Methodis' preacher. I'd keep wakin' up; but each and ev'y time I slep' I had the devil with me. The preacher, he didn't wake. He jus' snored right along, an' at las' I got up an' went downstairs an' slep' on

the floor. The preachers understan' how to talk an' that's all. I know a preacher who's the worst tyrant yo' ever see. His own wife is skeered of him, an' she have to wait on him like she was his servant. Yo' ever hear of a preacher payin' any board? Yo' ever hear of a preacher payin' mo'n half fare on the rail-road? No, they the greates' beggars in the worl'!



A Drink from the Suwannee

When a preacher come in one door I go out the other. The preachers tell how hit's mighty few ever gets to heaven, an' I made up my min' long time ago I rather go to hell with a good jolly crowd than go to heaven sneakin' up by myself."

"I declare!" said Mrs. Perky, "I boun' to make a slip-up on it ev'y time when I invite Uncle Rob to go to chu'ch."

"Well," commented her husband, "I wouldn't go myself if we was to have the preacher we had las' year. He was wild as a rabbit."

But it was to be a new man, and when the little bell in the cupola of the white folks' schoolhouse jingled, all of us except Uncle Rob went in that direction. The building was a fairly good one, but in poor repair. The schoolroom seats were carpenter-made settees. Several battered old desks were pushed out of the way at the rear. There had been no meetings for a long time, but now it was proposed to have them regularly, and, after some desultory visiting, a Sunday-school was organized. The newly elected superintendent—an elderly man who wore a starched white shirt, but had neglected to put on a collar and necktie—made a speech.

"I appreciate the honor you have done me in selectin' me for yo' leader," said he; "but I'm afeard you've made a mistake. I ain't an eddicated man, and I ain't worthy the position, but I'll do my bes', an' I want yo' all to take holt an' help. One thing special I wish you'd do is each an' ev'y one to bring a penny ev'y Sunday. A penny ain't much—if a man didn't have but one penny you'd think he was ve'y near penniless. But I tell you a heap of pennies makes a

whole big pile, an' that's what we'll have if ev'y one does their duty. Another thing—we got to buy some literature what to study the lessons from, an' I shall order it right away, but hit ain't anyways likely we can get the literature inside of a week, so I ask ev'y one who jines to have a verse nex' Sunday that begins with A, and study the third chapter of Matthew; and now I reckon I better give the bell another clap."

He stepped to the bell-rope which dangled down near the teacher's platform, gave a few pulls, and after waiting a few minutes for late comers, introduced the preacher. "He's got a farm over in Hamilton County," said the superintendent, "and he has to work hard for a livin' all the week. He don't git no pay for his preachin' excep' what we give, an' we sholy had ought to make up enough for to pay his ferriage, if nothin' mo'."

The preacher had come in his buggy, and had to cross the Suwanee at a cost of twenty-five cents each way. The audience numbered about sixty, and included several babbling babies. Now and then a dog wandered in at the open doors. Outside we could see a few of the village cows feeding along the railway track. Occasionally some one among the worshippers would spit on the floor. Those who tired of the service left when they felt so inclined, and by the close, a good many of the small boys and young men had gone.

The preacher took the crucifixion for the subject of his sermon. "Befo' I enter out on the discussion of my tex'," said he, "I wan' to say that I went off with the devil an' worked for him with all my might for three years. I know what it is to serve the devil, an' I know what it is to serve the Lord. Now, I wan' to tell yo' my ideas about the way the chu'ch take the Bible. They clean twis' the sense out of it. This Bible is ve'y bad treated. Yas, it is! Thar's a lot o' ferrysees to-day jus' as thar was in Chris' time. They make a great display of religion an' their big' gif's, but all that ain't of no account if they have not the right sperrit. How diff'rent do you think the chu'ch members now are from them of Chris' day who did that red-handed murder—that murder of the Son of God, which, when he die, make this ole worl' stagger like a drunken man?"

"Le' me tell you somepin, an' I want yo' to particular pay attention. It's somepin I never heered, but I figgered it out fo' myself, an' this is what it is—there's pride an' riches an' power in the chu'ch now jus' the same as two thousan' years ago, an' the chu'ch is one o' the greates' enemies of Chris' to-day. How many chu'ch members to-day yo' reckon are rael Christians? an' how many of *them* are only lukewarm! They too satisfied with theirselves. The devil, he make yo' think yo' clever feller an' doin' pretty well; an' he go on that away until he have yo' sho' enough. He

air gettin' to win mo' victories to-day than the Lord does. Yo' mus'n' shet yo' eyes to that thar.

"Now, somebody in this hyar crowd, when they make their egsit from this worl', is goin' to get to heaven an' beat ole Satan; but it'll be because they have raelly got Chris' — not because they belong to some big chu'ch. I wan' to tell yo' a little circumstance. Thar was a woman — an ole woman, who got children an' great-gran'children; an' the time come for her to go 'cross Jerdan, an' she wade in up to her knees, an' she get frighten', an' she turn roun' an' call to the people what stan'in' on the bank an' say she been a chu'ch member almost all her life. 'But oh!' she cry, 'I'm goin' 'cross Jerdan now without Chris'!' She hadn't raelly got Chris' in all them years — an' that, brothers and sisters, show us wharin we mus' be careful!"

A few minutes before the preacher finished, a train sped past on the near railroad, and when we came out we saw a crowd gathering a short distance up the track. The engine had hit a cow, and, as Mr. Swazey remarked, "had killed it dead as a houn'." There lay the mangled body, and the congregation went over and viewed it, but without much excitement. Village cows and hogs were sacrificed thus too often for that.

"I've eaten many a good piece of steak the engine killed," said Mr. Perky, when we were once more on his porch. "I reckon the owners 'll claim that was a

ve'y fine animal when they go to get the railroad to pay for her, but she was nothin' but an ole piney-woods cow. A Jersey is worth any two of her. You could mos' see through her she was so poor, an' she was ole enough to vote—that cow was. Co'se the meat can't be ve'y good, an' yet the niggers won't leave enough of that thar critter by mornin' to fill a post hole."

Not far away, in front of the store, a group of young men who had attended the meeting at the schoolhouse began singing hymns. One of them presently came over to the Perkys'. "How's yo' maw?" inquired Mrs. Perky, and she asked likewise about the health of the other members of his family. Then she requested him to have the group of young men at the store come to the house and sing. This they did, and by ransacking the dwelling, upstairs and down, enough seats were provided for them in the best room. There they sang gospel hymns with Mrs. and Miss Perky for an hour.

When the singers had dispersed and we had eaten supper, we gathered in the best room for the evening. Nan and her mother got out their Bibles, and pretty soon the former announced, "I done got my verse for nex' Sunday."

We asked her what it was, but she would not tell, and her mother said: "Yo' awful cheesey with it. I been lookin' for a word. Long time ago our superin-

tendent want us to find a word in the Bible that had all the letters of the alphabet in it but *j*, an' none of the letters twicet. I was young folks then, an' we putt in for it an' read our Bibles all our spare time for three weeks. We had a hunt for that word, we shore did! We would read till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and finally we found it. Seem like hit was in Daniel or some book close aroun' thar."

The sermon of the day was discussed, and it was agreed to have been a very good one. Mr. Swazey declared he liked especially the preacher's comments on church hypocrisy. "For instance," said he, "thar's all this kissin' the sisters in the chu'ch do. I allow hit air plumb deceptive. Mis' Perky, yo' don't think all yo' pertends to of them you kiss, yo' knows yo' don't! 'Twas Judas betray his Master with a kiss, an' hit seem like to me all this sisterin' what is done is some patterned after Judas."

Presently the conversation drifted into a discussion of baptism. Mr. Perky was a firm believer in immersion, but Mrs. Perky was not. "My mother was a good Baptist woman," said she, "an' she use to tell thar wa'n't any power in the world could change her in her belief, because she got it from the word of God. She brought me up to her way of thinkin', and I jined the Baptist chu'ch. I remember the day. It was raw an' col', an' I thought I ought to take some quinine so I not be sick. But maw, she say she wa'n't goin' to

give me any quinine, indeed. She say the weather don't matter — the Lord, He take care of me, an' He never would let no one get sick from bein' baptize. My little brother went to the baptizin', an' he couldn't understan' what it all meant, an' he study on it afterwards until he say, 'Well, I know now what the preacher said. He say, "I baptize thee, my sister, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and in the hole she goes;" and in the hole she did go!' Yes, the preacher putt me in all over, an' no mistake. But I was scandalous badly fooled jining the Baptists, and soon as I realize I didn't believe in immersion I jined the Methodists."

"Yo' belief is *con-tra-ry* to the Bible," affirmed Mr. Perky. "The Bible, hit say '*buried* in baptism.' When people air goin' to be buried in their grave yo' wouldn't jus' sprinkle a little dirt over 'em an' call that buryin'. No, yo' have to cover 'em all up, or they smell bad."

"Well," said Mr. Swazey, "if the Baptist reason for immersion is to git all cover up so they not smell bad, I believe hit a good thing. But I reckon we can't always be shore jus' what the Bible mean. The baptism yo' pattern after was in the river Jerdan, an' yet some pertends to say that the river Jerdan is only six inches deep, so yo' couldn't immerse no one in it, nohow."

"That seem mighty unlikely," was Mr. Perky's comment.



MOSQUITOES

"I don't see why," retorted his wife. "Yo' ain't got the sense that God give to geese, Mr. Perky. All rivers ain't deep like ourn."

"Anyhow," said Mr. Perky, "yo' can't find it in the Bible where they po' the water on."

"I don't care," was his wife's reply. "Yo' may cut my throat from year to year, but I'll never believe in immersion."

There was silence for a moment, and then Mr. Swazey remarked, "Yo' so certain, Mis' Perky, yo' remin' me of a darkey preacher what say to his hearers, 'If yo' doan' repent yo' sins an' believe, yo' go to hell jus' as sho' as I kill dis fly what have lit on de pulpit.' Then he give a slap with his hand, but the fly too quick for him. 'Ehh!' he say, 'I miss him, but yo' go to hell, anyway!'"

"What I don't like," Mr. Perky said, "is this hyar custom they gittin' to have of pools right in the chu'ch, and rubber clothes to put on. Hit don't seem like the Bible."

"No," agreed Mr. Swazey, "hit shore don't. If I was to be baptize in the Baptis' way, I would want to be baptize in runnin' water, outdoors."

"Hit's a pore way, indoors or out," affirmed Mrs. Perky, "and this hyar immersion ain't agreeable to think of, either. I know a young lady whose parents are Baptists, but who say she'll never jine the chu'ch if she got to be splunged or soused."

"There's hardly any one ever strangle to amount to anything," said Mr. Perky, and he tried to argue further; but Mrs. Perky would not listen to him, and broke in on every attempted remark of his with such loud-voiced opinions of her own that he subsided in discouragement.

Monday morning came, and the village labor was resumed, but not very strenuously. It took a good while to get over the Sabbath inertia, and there was even more than the usual amount of loafing. All day long a tired group of whites and blacks lounged on the store porch. Sometimes a negro would carry his guitar to the store and sit with his back against a porch post thrumming the strings by the hour.

Late in the day a son-in-law of the Perkys arrived from a neighboring hamlet, and asked Mrs. Perky to come and see about doctoring his wife and little girl, who were both sick. "They ain't so powerful bad off," explained Clarence, "but I want yo' to see 'em."

"Everybody come for maw from all aroun' when anything air the matter," said Nan. "She a master han' for doctorin'. She know all about medicines, an' if one kind don't do no good, she give another kind. She uses quinine an' calomel an' rhuberb an' Jenkins's Vegetable Pills, an' all such like things that you can buy at the stores. She don't believe, if yo' feel bad, in waitin' till yo' air sick abed. We had such bad luck in our family she mo' anxious than most. She had

twelve children, an' there only six now. So when one of us grunts, she think something got to be done right then an' thar. Hit shorely would surprise you the way she fly aroun' when she hear one of us grunting."

Mrs. Perky at first said she could not go, but Clarence would have to travel five miles farther to find a doctor, and finally she packed a basket and changed her gown, took a fresh dip of snuff, and went off with him.

Of all I saw on the Suwanee, the thing that most recalled the sentiment of the dialect song was a negro "festival and dance." Pay day at the turpentine still came every fourth week, and was sure to be followed by a celebration in some village home. On the pay day that fell within the period of my visit I began to see young colored women fluttering about in fine attire early in the afternoon, provoking the comment from Miss Perky that, "The niggers certainly can dress — yes, sir!" and there was a constant going to and from a certain house that marked it as the one where the ball was to take place. This house was larger than most negro dwellings, and had been originally built for white occupancy. It had a hallway and several rooms. The bed had been moved out of the largest of the rooms, and chairs had been set along the wall. When I looked in at nine o'clock the chairs had been taken possession of by the elderly people, with a few children and even babies among them. John Blue, the musical

expert of the hamlet, was picking his guitar, and the young people were prancing up and down the room — the maidens in gay, yet really pretty gowns of pink and white, but the men in very ordinary clothes, and wearing on their heads disreputable old hats and caps. During the interlude the men would light cigarettes at the kerosene lamp on the mantel, and the atmosphere became decidedly sickening.

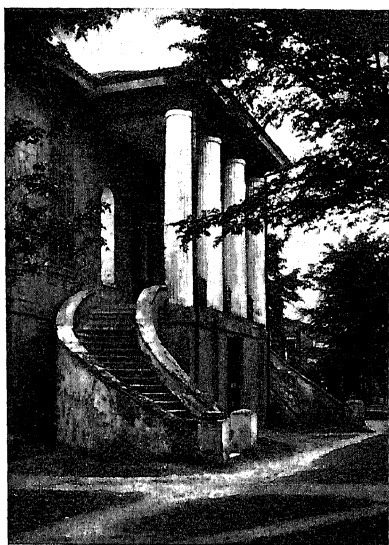
The feast that was served in connection with the merrymaking was in a back room, to which one had to grope along the dark hall. Here was a table spread with chicken, gingerbread, jelly-cake, etc. An old woman, with some coins knotted in her handkerchief, had charge of the feast, and sold the things as they were called for; and there was an ancient darky sitting close by with a basket full of peanuts which he had roasted and was ready to part with at five cents a cup.

The lady of the house had no "rejections" to my staying as long as I chose, but I felt I was an outsider, and presently returned to my lodging-place. This was near enough so that I heard the jigging of feet and the lively music of John Blue's guitar until the party broke up about midnight. I did not object to being kept awake, for the sounds were an echo of the song that had brought me to the Suwanee, and were very suggestive of the care-free happiness which made all the world seem

. "sad and dreary,
Far from the old folks at home."

III

A COUNTY SEAT IN ALABAMA



The Court-house Front

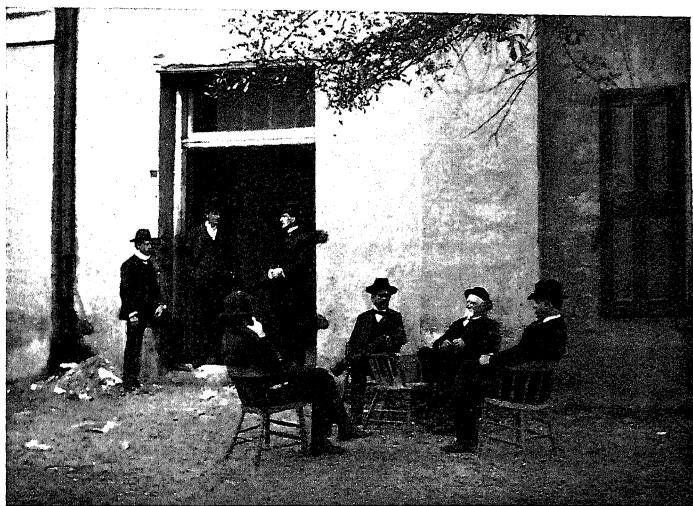
TUSKEGEE is best known as the home of Booker T. Washington's famous negro school, but the school is on the village outskirts, and the place has a well-defined character of its own. It is a typical Southern county town, and is a centre for the country population from miles around. Thither the people flock every market day for news

and gossip, for buying and selling, borrowing and paying, and for justice and law. The town is wide-streeted and placid, with a broad public square at its heart, bounded about by brick and wooden stores,

livery stables, law offices, etc. These structures are one and two stories high, and are pretty sure to have projecting from their fronts, across the sidewalk, an ample board roof to furnish shade; and between the supports of the roof, on the outside of the walk, is usually a plank seat. The walk is a good deal encumbered with displays of various goods, and here and there are careless huddles of empty whiskey-barrels and other receptacles. The barrels and boxes, in common with the plank seats and sundry doorsteps and benches, are utilized very generally by loungers. The populace like to sit and consider, and they like to take their ease when talking with their friends; while it occasionally happens that a dorky will be so overcome by weariness or *ennui* that he will stretch out on one of the larger boxes to enjoy a nap. A more aristocratic loitering-place than any provided by chance or intention as adjuncts of the stores, is a group of chairs at the rear door of the court-house. Every pleasant day these chairs are brought out into the shadow of the building and the near trees, where they are occupied by some of the village worthies for purposes of mild contemplation and discussion.

The court-house stands in the centre of the square, on a generous grassy oval that is separated from the rutted sandy earth of the rest of the square by a low fence. The building is a solid, but rather battered structure of brick, with quite a pleasing air of sedate

age. On the lower floor are the county offices, and among the other rooms is one reserved for the grand jury — a most rudely furnished apartment with a small fireplace and a deeply sanded floor. This sand is, I believe, intended to ameliorate the unevenness of the



A Favorite Loitering Place

original floor of brick, which is badly worn, but it makes the room look as if it had been prepared for the caging of wild beasts.

Upstairs is the court-room — a plain, old-fashioned apartment, heated by two small stoves. Its most noticeable characteristic is its odor of nicotine. The Southern men are famous smokers and chewers, and

they spit copiously and emphatically all day long. If they are where a fireplace or stove is handy, they make that their target, but in public buildings or conveyances they drench the floors, and the court-room had been thus soaked for two generations. I remember with what serious thoughtfulness and regularity the judge expectorated on the occasion when I was present. I had followed a squad of shackled negroes whom I happened to see conducted to the hall of justice from the jail, and I went in and looked on until their lawyer — a young white man — was well started in his attempt to clear them. He was a shouter, and he made himself heard through the open windows all over town. I tired of his ranting, and came away, but it was explained to me that he just suited the negroes. They had a feeling that a plea which failed to be violent-voiced and accompanied by wild gestures wasn't worth paying for. Sense was a minor consideration. "The louder a man holler, and the mo' he tear aroun,' the better they like him. They think he's gettin' thar then."

The business square on which the court-house looks out from its environing trees with serene though antiquated dignity is usually very quiet. The town life is not very energetic. A good many of the stores get along without sign-boards, and I frequently heard their proprietors whiling away their leisure in the recesses of their shops with a guitar, or cornet, or fiddle.



Quiet on the Town Street

They had plenty of time to visit with those who wandered in, whether to trade or to chat. Saturday is, however, an exception. That is market day, and the public ways and hitching-places are then crowded with mules and horses, many of them merely saddled, others attached to vehicles — vehicles that are occasionally modern, but oftentimes are otherwise, and that include some very curious makeshifts. Ox teams are common, and once in a while a negro drives a single ox harnessed between his cart-shafts.

I often lingered on the square and talked with other lingerers. One day an ancient, who said he had been a preacher in his younger days, started a conversation

by voicing the opinion that it was "goin' to rain. The sky's cl'ar overhead, but I been hearin' these old heavy thunders 'way off yonder, and that means rain. Yesterday morning it done that trick, and we had a right smart shower befo' night. I allow it would be a good thing for the crops to have a shower like that every day for a while."

"It's mighty cold weather for this time of year," remarked a tall man sitting on a near doorstep.

"That's so," agreed the preacher, "and I been lookin' it up in my almanac, and there was a cold spell, same as we are having, put down for near about this time. I tell you those almanacs hit it pretty good."

Just then a colored man came along. A conspicuous article of his apparel was a new pair of overalls with faded patches sewed on the knees and seat. The preacher accosted the negro and commented jocosely on the appearance of the overalls, but the negro replied that he reckoned it saved the garment more to patch it before it wore out than afterward.

"Like enough," said the preacher, and then he asked: "What's that I hear about your trickin' your next neighbor with a conjure-bag?"

But the negro disclaimed all knowledge of such a proceeding, and as to the conjure-bag, he affirmed, "That 'ar's somethin' I never tote."

"Oh, no, of co'se not!" responded the preacher, sarcastically, and then, turning to me, he added,

"They won't own to it, but they're plumb full of such superstitions."

"I doan' believe in 'em," said the negro.

"Yes, you do. If you was to wake up and find some one had sprinkled a line of salt aroun' your doorstep, and put a little bit of hair inside the line of salt, you'd think there was bad things goin' to happen to you. I know you, and I know your conjure-bags — them little bags with a few roots and things in 'em."

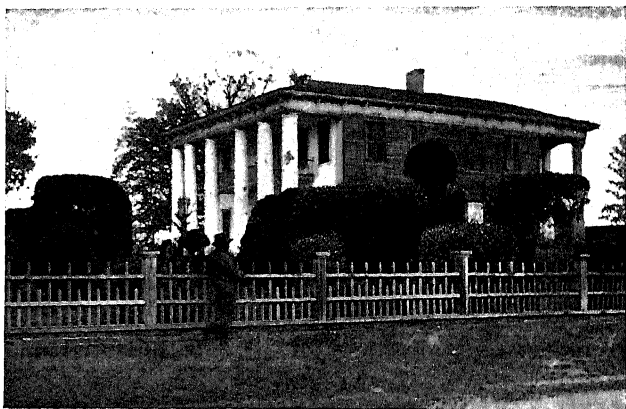
"I ricolict a circumstance," said the tall man on the doorstep. "About a year ago a few of us thought we'd have some fun with that ole nigger that lives all alone about a mile beyond the depot. We went one night and hitched a waxed string on to his cabin, and we'd scrape a stick across the string, and the noise it would make was something awful. .

"The nigger he pricked up his ears and he began to look aroun' this way an' that, and then he got a big club and sat there so scared it nearly took the curl out of his hair. Finally he went to prayin', and he put up a hot prayer, too, and we 'most killed ourselves laughin'.

"The nex' day I met him and I asked him what was the matter at his house las' night, and tol' him I was goin' pas' an' heard him prayin' so loud it made the shingles rattle on his roof, and he said: 'De devil done come to my place las' night, an' he was

boun' he gwine git me, an' I tried ev'ythin' to git quit of him, but he wouldn't go till I prayed de Lord, an' den I heard him movin' off down towards de swamp.' ”

“Well, he's a good ole nigger,” commented the preacher. “He never had any education and never wanted any. You take some of these young niggers that get a little learnin' and thar ain't no gittin' along with 'em. I'll say one thing, though, for this nigger school of Washington's hyar — they won't let



A Typical Old-time Mansion

'em be too uppity thar. I know a young nigger was one time comin' back from vacation, and the train was so crowded a good parcel of 'em had to stand, and some of 'em ladies. This fellow he had a seat, and he

said he wa'n't goin' to give it up. He'd paid his fare and he'd just as much right to sit as any one."

The preacher paused in his story and, addressing himself to me, remarked: "That's like the way you do in the North, but there ain't a white man in the South would sit a minute while a lady was standin'. Well, Booker was on that car and the young chap didn't know it, and Booker heard what he said and ask him, 'Whar are you goin'?'"

"And the young fellow says, 'To the school.'"

"And Booker says, 'No, you ain't. We don't want your sort hyar. You can turn aroun' and go home.' Yes, Booker's got some good ideas, if he is a nigger."

"Thar's Jake Durkin down at the corner," remarked the tall man on the doorstep. "He ain't been in town befo', I reckon, since his horse trade."

"What was the trouble?" I inquired.

"Why, Tuskegee is a great place for tradin' horses. They're at it all the time round back of the hotel. Jake's young, as yo' see, but he thought he could do as well as the nex' man in the horse business, an' it was time he had a try. So he rode into town, and the horse he come on was a crackerjack — a first-class good horse, right in his prime. Jake he went to the stable of one of our experts and he says, 'I've started out to do some horse-trading. Now,' he says, 'hyar's my horse. What have you got to put up against him?'

“ ‘Oh,’ the man says, ‘I don’t want to trade.’

“ ‘But that wouldn’t do. It only made Jake mo’ anxious, and he kep’ urg’in’ till the man says, ‘Well,



Repairing a Chair

hyar’s a good horse, and I don’t mind tradin’ him if I can get my price.’

“ ‘The horse looked fine in the stall, though he was thirty years old — a good deal older’n Jake was — and the man had paid about fifteen dollars for him.

“ ‘Well, how’ll yo’ trade?’ says Jake.

“ ‘Why, I’ll give you five dollars to boot.’

“‘I’ll tell you what I’ll do,’ says Jake; ‘you make it ten and it’s a go.’

“And the man did, and Jake changed his saddle on to the new horse and went off, feelin’ putty well satisfied with himself. But everybody in town guyed him. They said he couldn’t get home with such a horse, and finally it kind of dawned on him he’d made a mistake, and he went back to the stables. ‘See hyar,’ he says, ‘they’re all a-tellin’ me I can’t get home with this horse.’

“‘Well, I don’t care,’ says the man. ‘That’s nothing to me. It makes no diff’rence to me whether yo’ go home or whar yo’ go.’

“‘But I traded yo’ a fine young horse,’ says Jake.

“‘And I traded yo’ a fine old horse,’ says the man.

“‘Well, I want to trade back,” says Jake.

“‘But I don’t; I’m satisfied,’ says the man.

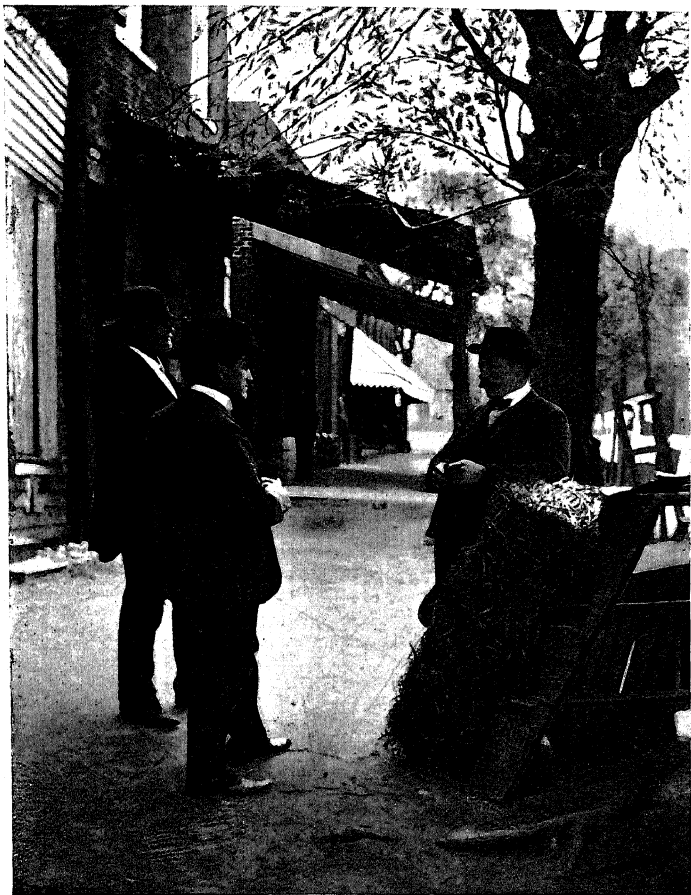
“And so they had it back and forth until the man said if Jake would return the ten dollars he’d give and twenty besides, he’d trade. ‘I only do it for one thing,’ he says — ‘because yo’re young. Yo’ve got back the horse now yo’ had in the first place, but it’s cost yo’ twenty dollars for bein’ so confounded smart.’”

“Jake’s father was a good judge of horse flesh,” observed the preacher; “but the war didn’t leave him any horses to trade, and he never got into tradin’ again.”

"You Northern people never knew what war was," said the tall man, turning to me; "and we didn't have it aroun' hyar at its worst. We never see any Federals until the very end. Then the whole army done gone through hyar — fifteen or twenty thousand of 'em. I remember just how they went, — tromp, tromp, tromp, — as regular as the tick of a clock, all day long. They didn't do much harm except to take all our horses and mules so thar wa'n't a huf left.

"Befo' the war we had hyar the finest country on God's earth, with plenty of niggers to wait on us, and everything else. The niggers was well took care of then, too. They didn't have so much sickness as they do now. They didn't drink so much bad whiskey, an' they wa'n't allowed to roam all about at night. Their houses was kep' tighter and they was given enough bedclothes to keep warm, and soon as they was sick they had the doctor. Once in a while one of 'em'd run away to get quit of bein' sold or whipped; but a man in town had a pack of track houn's special for chasin' niggers, and we'd always ketch 'em. Sometimes the dogs'd mighty nigh eat the nigger up. If we had good luck, we'd have the runaway ketched befo' he'd been in the woods twenty-four hours, and then again we might not get him for two or three months.

"I was tellin' you we didn't see no fightin' hyar, but what we did see was all the business stop, and most of the stores closed. Our manufactured supplies



A DISCUSSION

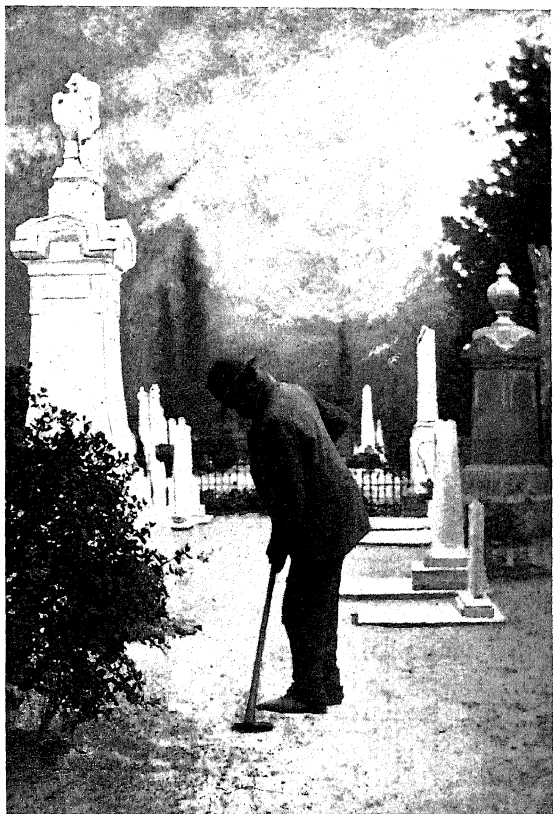
was cut-off, and we took to weavin' cloth on the old hand looms; we tanned our own leather, and made our own shoes, and all that. It was like settin' up a new country. During the last two years thar was no coffee, no sugar, and no tobacco, and it got to be a mighty tight time. We had thousands of corn, meat and provisions, and plenty of money, only the money wa'n't worth nothin'. People that had things to sell would rather have their goods than the darn stuff. I've paid two hundred and fifty dollars for a hat and five hundred dollars for a pair of boots. Yes, a man could bring to town a roll of money as large round as his thigh and take back all he could buy with it in an envelope. After Lee surrendered I made a great big fire out of my money — burned up fifteen hundred dollars. My mother had over ten times what I had, and she stowed her money away in the garret. She's dead now, but I reckon that money's in the garret thar yet."

"That reminds me," said the preacher, rising, "I must go over to the bank and see about a loan they was goin' to make me."

The president of the bank was an old schoolmate of his, and the preacher mentioned with pride that, as a special favor to him, the loan was to be at ten per cent. Interest rates are high in all parts of the South, and in many sections one to two per cent a month is commonly charged. The man who will loan at ten per cent is regarded as a public benefactor.

The principal streets radiating from the Tuskegee town square are broad and tree-lined, and are flanked by fine old mansions, some in serene retirement beyond a formal garden, some approached by an avenue of great trees. Tuskegee was one of the richest towns in the state "befo' the war"; but, while the vicinity was never fighting-ground, the conflict left it devastated and ruined, in common with the rest of the Confederacy, so that, although you still find the old-time mansions and the ample grounds, they are not, as a rule, well kept up, and some are far gone in decay and dilapidation. The dwellings are of two types—the low and spreading with wide piazzas, and a higher and more imposing style with pillared fronts like Greek temples. On warm days the doors are thrown wide open and you can see straight through the central hall which penetrates and ventilates these homes of the sunny South from front to rear.

Just outside of the village is the white folks' cemetery, of which they are very proud, for it is full of monuments, and receives constant care; but to me it looked like a desert—as if the spot was blasted. It is a wholly grassless waste of sand, relieved only by clumps of flowering shrubs and scattered trees. Roads and paths are marked by bordering lines of bricks set up on edge so as to overlap each other in saw-toothed fashion, and family plots are ordinarily enclosed either by a brick wall or, more likely, by a forlorn-looking



Keeping the Grass out of the Cemetery

wooden fence. An old negro is kept busy hoeing up such stray spears of grass and sproutings of weeds as chance to start, and owners of plots often supplement his labors in keeping the earth befittingly barren by

bringing rakes and brooms and giving the sand above their family graves a thorough scratching and brushing. Then it appears beautiful in their eyes. Grass seems to them unkempt.

A great deal of money has been spent on the monuments, and the desire to emulate others in funeral display has plainly resulted in expenses far beyond the means of many who have put up these fine stones. Very few of them date back more than thirty or forty years. They have nearly all been bought in the period of the town's poverty.

The negroes have a separate cemetery. If a colored person was to be buried among the whites, the latter would all rise from their graves in indignation. How they tolerate the "niggers" in heaven is a mystery, unless the mansions there are provided with kitchens and stables. But, whatever the state of affairs in heaven, no mixing is allowed in this Tuskegee burial-place, and the negro dead are interred a half-mile farther on, where cultivated fields give way to scrubby woodland. In a humble way their cemetery is a copy of that of the whites. Fences have been built around quite a number of family plots, and the ground in some cases is kept free from greenery by occasional hoeings and sweepings. Several of the graves were marked with diminutive slabs of marble; others had neatly painted white boards set up; but most, if marked at all, had only bits of wood, though not

infrequently the graves were outlined by a border of bricks or bottles. The cemetery was not enclosed, and many of the rude fences about the family plots were falling to wreck. Its pleasantest features, as I saw it,



The Negro Cemetery

were the tufts of wild violets that grew plentifully and two black-gum trees all ahum with honey-gathering bees.

While I was loitering there an elderly negro came along the path leading through the brush from the town. Over his shoulder he carried a spade, under his arm a box, and in one hand a piece of board. He approached me, and holding out the piece of board, said: "Would yo' write on dis yere for me, Cap?"

When I war young I war dat triffin' I learnt every kind of divilment, but I didn't learn to read an' write, an' I wish yo'd copyfy de name on dis yere box."

The box was a coffin, and contained the body of a child. It was a slight affair obtained at a grocer's, and some printing on the end in red and black showed it had originally held canned tomatoes. After I had copied the name the old man poked around considering where he had better dig the grave. He soon selected a spot, and was not long in making a shallow trench in the sandy earth. Then he put in the coffin, shovelled back the sand, set up the headboard with its pencilled lettering, and at the foot of the grave stuck in a stick he picked up near by. That done, he plodded off toward the town, and the melancholy little funeral was ended.

Off on another road, well away from the village, is a colored folks' camp-meeting ground. It is on a hill-slope with a thin growth of woods round about, and not even a negro house in sight. Here stands a great, low, wide-spreading shed of a building, open on all sides. The seats for the worshippers are rough planks, some of them a sawmill product, and others hewed out with axes, and very thick and clumsy. The pulpit platform and furnishings were scarcely less rude. Just outside the building at the rear was what looked like a sacrificial altar. It was a slight platform of short boards supported on four stakes and covered



AN IMPROVISED HOTHOUSE

with a few inches of earth and a strewing of coals. No doubt a fire was built on it nightly to light the approach to the evening meetings. At a little remove were several ruinous cabins. They had bunks in them and fireplaces, and would be repaired at camp-meeting time to serve as lodgings for those who came from a distance. The annual midsummer meetings are very picturesque; yet they are not nearly so wild and barbaric as such meetings were formerly, and decorous intelligence is everywhere becoming more characteristic of the negro religious gatherings.

I returned from the camp-grounds by a field-path. On the dry slopes hugging the earth grew numerous spiny cacti of the prickly-pear order, and they were loaded with fruit. Southern children sometimes eat the pears, though there is not much to them save seeds and a tang of acidity. The woods were gay with the blooming dogwood which one might easily mistake at a little distance for bushes full of white butterflies, and there were pink azaleas and hawthorn, and a multitude of lesser blossoms, while along the fences in the opens were coral honeysuckle, blackberries, and wild roses all in flower. For a portion of the way I followed one of the brooks, or "branches," as the smaller streams are called in the South, through a loosely wooded hollow. On the hilltops the wind blew a chilly gale, but here the air was quiet and tinged with springlike warmth. Best of all, I came on a "mocker" in full song—a

changing, eloquent song with many surprises, trills, whistles, and snatches of melody.

I left the hollow not far from Mr. Washington's school, and, on climbing a high zigzag fence, startled a young negro student who had secretly constructed here an amateur hothouse. He had taken some discarded windows and other odds and ends and tinkered up a structure three or four feet square and six or seven high, that was quite ingenious. He had contrived to keep it heated with a cast-off lamp that he set inside an old tin pail to form a kind of furnace. To a certain extent this hothouse was a plaything, yet he was by its means doing some genuine investigation into the principles of plant growth and nurture. He was perhaps making more of his school opportunities than most; but the students, as a whole, are remarkably earnest, and are intent on getting all the good they can out of their course. I doubt if there is a white school in our entire country where the mental and moral atmosphere is so good. The students are not merely working to help themselves, but to be uplifters of their race. They are obliged to subsist on the plainest fare, to learn order, cleanliness, industry, and promptness. Small vices are not tolerated, nor any tendency to foppish display.

The school is an inspiration, and the master spirit is Booker T. Washington—a man who, in spite of his fame, continues unspoiled; a man of rare simplicity

and ability and hard sense, giving his life to stem the tide of ignorance and poverty and the attendant evils that weigh down his people. One does not have to be long in the South to appreciate the immense need and importance of his work.



A Country Mule hitched on a Town Street

IV

AMONG THE GEORGIA CRACKERS



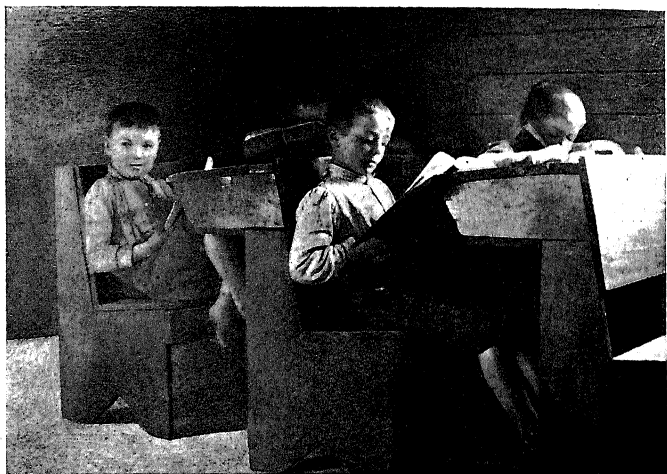
At Home

I WAS at Crick-boro, a typical small village in the northern part of Georgia. There were perhaps a dozen houses in the hamlet, and others were scattered at intervals along the country roads of the vicinity. Most of them were one story in height, and all were small. Some of the poorer ones had only board shutters at the win-

dow openings. Nearly all the barns and outbuildings were of logs, and occasionally there was a log house. In the midst of the village, or "settlement," as it was called, were four or five little stores. They had no

show windows, and were as simple and rustic as they well could be. Sunrise was their opening time. At noon the owners locked up and went home to dinner, and in the dusk of early evening they closed their establishments for the night. The stores seemed rather numerous for so diminutive a place, and much of the time I saw the lone proprietor of each sitting in the doorway, as if he was a monstrous spider with net spread, waiting for his prey. Every store was supplied with several chairs, and these were seldom without occupants in good weather. The favorite position was just outside the door, where, sociably and comfortably, the loiterers could observe whatever was going on.

Up a steep hill just east of the village was the Baptist church and the schoolhouse, the former painted, the latter colored only by the sun and rain; yet the schoolhouse was a good-sized building, as it had need to be, to accommodate its hundred pupils. School began in November and closed in April, and was in charge of a man teacher, spoken of as "the professor," and a lady assistant. The children were at their tasks for seven hours daily, or, to quote my landlady, "The school takes 'em up at eight in the morning and turns 'em out at four in the evening." Most of the children brought their dinners, and the noon hour was known as "playtime." There was, of course, a recess in each session, "but I call it a watering time," said



A Schoolroom Corner

my landlady, "because they spend most of the fifteen minutes around the schoolhouse well, drinking."

This well was behind the school building under a little open shed, and the water was drawn up from the depths with a bucket and windlass. ✕

On the hill close by the church was the cemetery. The soil was full of stones, and whenever a new grave was dug quite a heap of them would be thrown out, and there they lay until the persons most concerned found it convenient to cart them away; "and that's a good long time," was my landlady's comment. "I should think the ghostes of them that air buried would come aroun' an' nudge up their relatives about them stones."

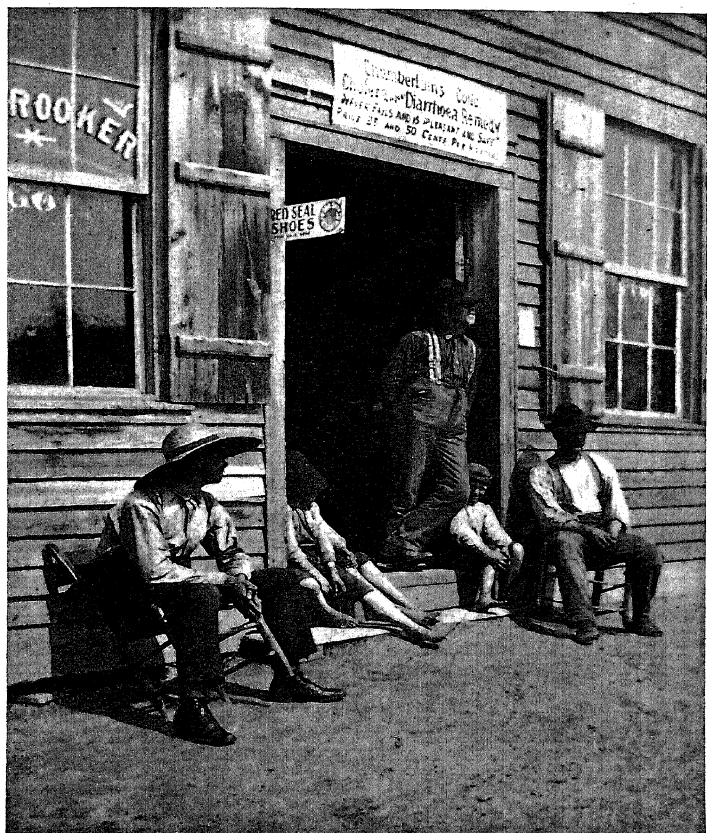
The cemetery was unfenced, but this condition was to be remedied. The ladies of the community were making a quilt, for which they proposed there should be a raffle. Certain members of the church said a raffle was no better than gambling. Others deemed it entirely innocent, and argued that raffling, or methods equivalent, were employed for raising funds in churches everywhere. Anyway, it was the only possibility the quiltmakers could see of getting enough money for the fence, and they were hastening to finish the work as soon as they could.

A half-mile up the road from the village was a second house of worship, commonly called "the Hardshell Church," or, as its adherents would say, "the Old Primitive Baptist Church." They believed in doing the Lord's work as the spirit moved, and they would have no hireling ministers. To be sure, they paid their preachers, but each person contributed as his conscience dictated, and there was no tax or compulsion. X The edifice was a brown, ramshackle structure without turret or bell, and extremely rough inside and out. Until recently services had been held at the Hardshell Church once a month, but the itinerant preacher had lost his life in the winter while crossing a flooded river. "He and another man," said my informant, "got in a ferry skiff and started to pull hit over to the other side of the river by holdin' on with their hands to a wire rope that was stretched acrost.

But the current was so swift hit jerk the boat out from under them. One man, he hung on to the wire an' got to shore, but the preacher, he was drowned."

At the church in the village they had Sunday-school every Sabbath, and preaching every second Sabbath. Sunday afternoons the young folks to the number of thirty or forty were accustomed to gather for "a sing" in one of the houses, and once a year there was "an all day sing" at the church. This all day sing drew together the people for ten or twelve miles around. They came on foot, on saddle-horses, and in all sorts of vehicles, and they brought feed for their horses and lunches for themselves, and each one who owned a copy of "The Old Christian Harmony" brought that to sing from. Not half the people could get into the church, and the surplus lingered about outside and visited. The musical exercises of the occasion were not as extended as one would fancy from the expression "an all day sing." The program was — Sunday-school nine to ten in the morning, preaching eleven to twelve-thirty, and singing from two to four in the "evening." This word "evening" is used in Georgia in the same sense that we in the North use "afternoon," and as soon as supper has been eaten they consider it no longer evening, but "night."

Every church in the region had its annual all day sing, which was perhaps the greatest pleasure of the year. There were, however, various lesser pleasures,



A COUNTRY STORE

especially in winter. Then they had parties with an accompaniment of dancing, if girls enough were present who did not belong to the church. But most of the young women joined the church by the time they were fifteen or sixteen, and after that would not indulge in so doubtful an amusement.

Yet they had no hesitation in taking part in the games of "Stealing Partners," "Twistification," and "Fancy Four" — games which do not differ much from dancing, except in name.

"The way we play 'em is this," said a young fellow who enlightened me on the subject; "there's music to all of 'em, and while the fiddle's a-goin' we skip aroun' and try to knock with the music. In Stealing Partners, we all have partners but one boy, and he pick out any girl he want and swings. That leave another boy without a partner, and *he* have to pick out a girl and swing her, and so on.

"For Twistification we all gets in line, boys on one side, girls on the other, with room for a couple to march up between us in dancing step. At the end of the line they swing and we all promenade. Then we form the line and start again.

"Fancy Four is a good deal like Twistification, only two couples instead of one do the dancing and promenading. Of co'se these games ain't regular dancing. That wouldn't be allowed at most houses. They're Christian dancing."

The parties at which these games are played are quite apt to take the form of "Pound Suppers." To these the girls contributed cake, and each young man brought a pound of candy, or apples, or oranges, or crackers, or whatever he chose to furnish.

☞ Corn and cotton were the principal crops of the region, and the fields were busy with workers ploughing, strewing fertilizer, and getting the seeds into the ground. The corn was hand-planted, and much of it was dropped by the sunbonneted women walking up and down the furrows. In the autumn the corn ears were picked and the stalks left standing in the fields until spring. I recall seeing the women armed with heavy hoes chopping off these stalks and piling them up to be bound, or "toting" them to the borders of the fields where they would be out of the way. In the middle of one such field lay a baby wrapped in a blanket. It was crying lustily, and its mother was hacking away as rapidly as she could so as to get through and take care of the youngster. ✕

Bee-keeping was a common industry, though owing to the antiquated way in which the bees were cared for, very little honey was marketed. One Sunday the bees belonging to an old man who lived across the road from my boarding-place swarmed, and he began to ring a cow-bell. It was a beautiful sunny morning, so calm you could hear all sounds for miles around — the bird songs, the barking of dogs, voices in the village,

and some one singing in the woods half a mile away. Then came the dinging of that hideous cow-bell, and I ran across the way to find out what had happened. The garden in front of the old man's house was overhung by a shifting cloud of noisy-winged bees. There was serious doubt as to the intentions of this humming, whirling mass, and the cow-bell was intended to bedizen the bees' minds so that they would settle down on the garden shrubbery instead of fleeing to the woods as instinct prompted them to do.

Presently the old man ceased his dolorous ringing and slipped a fly-netting over his head, and gloves on his hands, and proceeded to investigate closer. The neighbors hung over the picket fence and advised, though sometimes scattering and seeking safety at a greater distance when the bees came too close. This running away seemed to me rather unnecessary, and I held my ground until a bee lit on the tip of my nose. Such familiarity on the part of the armed and angry insect was too much for my equanimity, and I could not resist the impulse to dash it off. That was a fatal mistake, and the bee left its sting. Oh, how it hurt! and I beat an inglorious retreat, and did not return to see whether the old man lost his swarm or not.

The hives in which the bees were domiciled were spoken of as "gums." Usually they were simply oblong, upright boxes of home manufacture; but in earlier times sections of hollow black-gum trees served

the purpose — hence the name. Black-gum hives can still be found, and I saw several in a house yard about two miles from the settlement. There were sixteen



Bee Gums

hives in all ranged along the fence, and about half of them were genuine gums.

† While I stood near the gate looking at the gums, a man appeared in the house door and invited me to

have a chair on the porch. The courtesy and friendly cordiality of the Southern people were always a marvel to me. The stranger is at once made welcome, your entertainer's home is yours for the time being, and the family will all do their best to make your visit agreeable to you. I accepted the chair proffered me, but I begged off when the man and his wife, who had also come out on the porch, suggested I should go inside and play on their organ. They told me a large proportion of the homes in the vicinity had acquired organs within the last few years, and that certain members of each household had learned to play "hymn tunes." I could see the instrument through the open door with the enlarged portrait of a baby in its coffin hung over it.✕

From the porch I had an excellent opportunity to watch the bees. The air was vibrant with a thousand wings as the busy insects darted off to the blossoming orchards and woodlands, or came home with their sweet burdens. The log hives were prepared for their tenants by the lady of the house, the chief requisite being an absolutely tight top. After cleaning out the dead centre from the section of log, she nailed a board on one end and crowded bits of cloth under the edge with a knife. Then she turned the gum bottom upwards and tested it by pouring in water. If the water did not leak out the gum was all right, but the bees would refuse to occupy it unless the top was perfectly

tight. She said the bees liked the log hives better than the board hives, and did better in them. June was the "bee-robbing time," and then the family took out what honey they wanted themselves and gave away a good deal to neighbors who did not have bees.

✕ When I concluded my visit I returned to the settlement. Two of the children of the house where I had been calling went with me. The older one, a girl, carried a basket; the other, a boy, carried a pail, and in these receptacles they were taking butter and eggs to one of the stores, and would exchange them for groceries. Nearly all the small marketing of this sort is done by the women and children, and they are very apt to go and come on foot.

✕ We had to pass through a bit of woods, and in a hollow among the trees we crossed a little stream, and the children pointed out a pool and said: "That's the baptizin' hole. That thar's whar they baptize at the Hardshell Chu'ch, an' they make the water deep enough by damming it just down the branch a little way. The las' one to be baptize hyar was Becky Brock, what they call Sis Brock."

We had passed over the stream by a log adjusted for the purpose. Small streams were numerous in the region, but whether they were trickling rills or creeks ten or fifteen feet broad, no means were provided for crossing them save these log foot-bridges. The log was usually hewed off flat on the upper side, and some



A Foot-bridge

of the longest and highest footways had a slight railing nailed on one side of the logs. Adjoining the bridge was always a ford where saddle-horses and teams waded through; and these fords served very well, except after storms, when passage was frequently impossible for several hours.

On the outskirts of the village I one day stopped to speak with an elderly man working with three boys and a pair of mules in a wayside cotton field. Mr. Shenton — that was his name — was doing more directing than actual working, and when I greeted him he desisted from his labor and mounted the rail fence to visit more at ease.

"What's land worth up in your beat?" he inquired.

I gave him an estimate, and he said: "The best land we got hyar won't sell for more than fifteen or twenty dollars an acre, except some slopes suited for peaches; those being as much as fifty dollars an acre. \ Won't you come over to the house an' set awhile? I ain't well, an' I depen' mos'ly on the boys, my gran'sons, to work the crops."

At the house we found his wife standing in the doorway smoking her pipe; and beside her was a rosy-cheeked little granddaughter, not yet three years of age, with a snuff dip in her mouth. I had seen plenty of women with snuff sticks protruding from their lips, not only when they were about their homes, but when they were walking on the roads and riding on the trains. I had not, however, previously encountered so youthful a snuff-taker. There were tears in her eyes. She had just been punished for tipping over the snuff-box.

"I reckon that chile use ten cents of snuff a week with what she dip an' waste, too," said the woman. "Tobacco do cost. The person what don't use hit at all had ought to get rich. Ellen, Ellen!" she called, stepping back into the house a moment, "come and take cyar of this baby;" and the little one's mother came out on the porch and sat down with the child in her lap.

"This baby was always po'ly until las' winter," Ellen

explained, "an' the doctor say she couldn't live, so we let her have what she want. Hit seem like she crave for tobacco, an' she learn to dip snuff an' she learn to chew. Most all the women an' girls hyar use snuff. The boys an' men dip some, but generally they jus' chew an' smoke./ The boys learn to chew when they air little, an' they keep on chewin' till they air settled married men. Then they begin to smoke a pipe. The girls learn to dip snuff when they go to school, though hit ain't allowed if the master know hit. But the smaller girls they think they got to do like the big girls, an' thar's lots o' snuff-dippin' at recess an' noontime, when the teacher don't see hit.† I don't remember how ole I was when I begun to use tobacco, but I remember hit made me sick. Paw let us get a chew from his box whenever we want hit. I don't chew none now, and I have try to give up my snuff, but hit seem to be like usin' opium, or drinkin' spirits — yo' cain't stop."

"I've heered they don't use snuff out North the way we do hyar," said Mrs. Shenton. "I was ridin' on the cyars one day an' two Northern women set in front of me tellin' how awful they thought hit was — our snuff-dippin'; but while those two women talk they swear right along scandalous, an' I allow I rather have our snuff-dippin' than to swear the way the Northern women do."

The afternoon was waning, and the hens were flap-

ping up to their roosting-place in the limbs of a cedar close by the porch. "Well, I got to be gettin' at my work," remarked Mrs. Shenton. "Hit's a right smart of a job to take cyar of this house; but Ellen, she do most of the work now. I done quit it. All



Working in the Garden

our eight boys an' girls gone excep' Ellen, and if she leave, too, we'd give up the place an' go travellin' an' visitin' about among our children."

† When I bade the family "good-by" I was urged to call again and to come in sometime to dinner. This invitation to dinner I accepted a few days later. I was a little early, and Mr. Shenton was out in the field relaying a zigzag fence; but his wife welcomed me to

a chair on the porch and assured me he would be in when the "dinner train" went along. It seemed that a train passed about twelve o'clock and was known as the dinner train, because its passing was a signal that eating time had come. As soon as it hove in sight every one in the fields promptly started for the house,

"The ole man done taken a likin' to you," Mrs. Shenton informed me, "an' he want to talk with you. He gettin' childish, now, the ole man is. He been sick a long time, an' he ain't plough a furrow in twelve years. His trouble is asthma. We cain't have any flowers in the house on account of hit, an' when this hyar little fuzz come on the willers he cain't sleep day or night. The time he begun to be bad that-away he went to a doctor what was a specialist in Chattanooga. He only go to him three times, but the doctor holp him lots, an' he charge him fifty dollars."

"Yes," said Ellen, looking out from the kitchen, "we pay fifty dollars, and when we ask the doctor what the medicine was and the receipt of hit, so we could get some mo' if paw need hit, he wouldn't tell; but we think paw had got well, and the doctor have him sign a letter to use in his advertising, saying how much good he done him, and how peart he was feelin'; and the doctor say if paw sick again he doctor him free. But I reckon he forget about that. He move away to St. Louis, and when paw get worse we learn the new address from Mr. Willard down hyar at Swamp Creek,

what was afflicted with his eyes and was doctorin' with the same man; and the doctor write he make paw a very low rate—only five dollars a month, in advance; and that air what we air a-payin' to him now. Oh! we done spent the price of a good farm doctorin' in the last twelve years.”

Just then the dinner train rumbled past, and Mr. Shenton came hobbling in from his fencing, and the boys soon followed, riding on the mules. We had fresh pork for dinner. A neighbor “had killed a shote last week of a Saturday,” and, in accord with the usual custom in warm weather, had shared the meat with all the families living near. / Among the other eatables on the table were “water-creases” and “roas'in' years.” My hosts ate the former cut up with onions and doused with hot grease and vinegar. The latter was green corn of home preserving served in the kernel, though it was still called “roas'in' years.” The butter was noticeable because of its whiteness. It would have passed very well for lard; “but we'll have hit yellow as gold,” said Mrs. Shenton, “after the cows begin to get the new grass in the pastures.”

While we were at the table I spoke of an event of importance that had recently been discussed in every newspaper in the country. The family had not heard of it. Mr. Shenton said, “The papers, they got fill up with so much depredation of one kind an' another I stopped a-takin' of 'em.”



HICKORY WHISTLES

After we had eaten and adjourned to the porch, Mr. Shenton made some mention of the war, and said, "Johnston whipped the very wax out of Sherman right over hyar about three mile."

"Our place was right atween the two armies," added Mrs. Shenton. "I was to home, and I had our little boy with me. Some of the bullets come right through the wooden walls, and we sat in the fireplace durin' the fightin'. The soldiers had took all there was to eat in the house. They didn't leave nary a thing, cooked or uncooked. But I didn't want to eat that day. The little boy, he got hungry and begun to fret toward night, and a soldier what come in give him some hard-tack."

Mr. Shenton had served in the Confederate army under Bragg. His opinion of that leader was not very flattering. "Why!" said he, "if Bragg whipped the fight, he'd run."

"Whar my ole man suffered the worst was at Vicksburg, when Grant had 'em besieged thar," affirmed Mrs. Shenton.

"We was eatin' mule beef toward the last," said the veteran, "an' I know I paid twenty-five dollars for a biscuit. Grant no need to have been so long about takin' the place, but he seem boun' to charge in jus' one place, an' we concentrate our men thar, an' have the advantage. We see Grant, every time when he gettin' ready to charge, march his men aroun' to some whiskey barrels, an' every man drink; an' many of 'em

so drunk when the fight begin they couldn't fire a gun. They each carry a little flag, and some run way up to our breastworks and stick that thar little flag on top, an' then we reach out an' get those soldiers by the collar an' drag 'em in an' they our prisoners. There was always terrible slaughter of Grant's men; but the North could git as many more as hit wanted. Hit had hits own men and hit hired men from Europe. Lots of 'em couldn't speak English; and lots of 'em that *could* speak English, when we ask 'em, 'What are you all fightin' we-uns for?' they'd say, 'For sixteen dollars a month.' That was all they knowed about hit."

"Of them that went to the war from aroun' hyar, I think no one come home worse off than Reuben Snell," remarked Mrs. Shenton.

"Yes," corroborated her husband, "his mind not been quite right since."

"For one thing," Mrs. Shenton continued, "he won't never tech no money. He say money burn him, an' he won't shake hands with no one who's been a-handling of it. He has bad spells, an' when one o' them spells come on he begin to smell gunpowder an' to feel bad. Then he call on God to help him, an' he feel better. While he have those spells he preaches, though I never did hear him but once. That time he took the almanac, and he say, 'I'll preach a big un.' He held the almanac upside down, but that didn't

make no difference, 'cause he cain't read a speck, anyway, an' he say, ' My tex' is " Broad is the road that lead to destruction "' ; an' he preach quite a sermon."



Neighbors

Reuben Snell lived far back in the woods. I was passing his place one day, and I stopped for a drink of water. Reuben himself drew some fresh from the well and handed me a gourd full. He was a pallid, peculiar-looking man, and I was not surprised when he said: " I been sick an' full of pains. My arm is thataway I can't wind the clock steady. I wind a little and my arm 'bleedged to drap. The devil he 'flicts a heap of people so they cain't hardly git along."

The house was a little affair of two rooms. There was a loft over them, but it was too low for any use except "storing ole loose plunder."

Mrs. Snell sat knitting in the kitchen doorway. "Whar do you live out when you're to home?" she asked.

X "I live in Massachusetts," I replied.

"Oh, in Boston," she commented. All through the South I found Boston was considered the equivalent of Massachusetts, if not of all New England. "That's sort o' north from hyar, ain't it?" Mrs. Snell went on, "I ain't got no larnin', an' I cain't quite place it exact; but hit's a good piece from hyar, I reckon. Thar was a man come to the settlement last year from New York or Injiana, or somewhere way back North."

Mrs. Snell did her cooking over an open fire. "Me 'n' Reuben like biled victuals on the fireplace the best," she explained; "and Reuben, since he been like he is, and not got his mind right, he won't eat corn bread baked on the stove. I bake it in a skillet on the hearth. I putt my bread in and putt on the led, and heap coals and ashes on the led, and hit bakes nice." X

At one side of the house was a pile of thin, narrow, oak boards about three feet long, such as are substituted very commonly in the rural South for shingles. "Reuben did 'em," said Mrs. Snell, "an' they ought to be on the ruf, but thar ain't enough yet. Hit's

slow work for him, but them that's used to hit can split out a right chance of ruf boards directly."

Near by was an orchard of apple and peach⁺ trees. "I can up a lot of the peaches, and I always dry some," Mrs. Snell informed me.

"Peaches are powerful good for hogs," remarked Reuben. "We tote in great loads to 'em and the hogs git plumb fat. Our hogs use' to run in the woods befo' this new law was made, an' that save us from havin' to feed 'em a heap. Hit's the devil's law — this law agin lettin' your hogs run." X

"Do they have many niggers in the country whar you was raised?" asked Mrs. Snell. "Thar's a sight o' niggers down hyar; you're right thar is — What was that noise?"

She paused in her knitting and listened.

"I hear a' kind of screeching off beyond the orchard," said I.

"Oh, then that's the Roberts boys. Mr. Roberts got a house over yonder. His boys they always a-hollerin'. They got so they hol' their han's together an' squeal through their fingers same like the noise of a pig squeal."

I mentioned some things the Shentons had told me of their war experiences, and Mrs. Snell said: "The time we had the fightin' right aroun' hyar, my home was jus' west of the settlement on the big road, an' the noise of the cannons and guns mighty near deafened

me. The soldiers they trampled down my wheat which was headin' out, an' I had a young calf, an' they killed hit, an' I had two yearlings, an' they killed those. Them Northern soldiers they jus' robbed people. They tuk every knife an' fork I had, an' mos' every-thing else out of my house. I had a nice gyarden, an' they tore off the palin's an' pulled up my ing-uns an' potatoes. I had a cow, an' they said they would milk her; and I said, 'No, you won't—she'll hook you to death;' and she would, too, if they hadn't put up stakes all aroun' her until she couldn't hardly stir. I told 'em I hoped to God they might roost in hell for takin' my things, and they said if I didn't shut my mouth they'd shoot me down. Well, I tell you hit's bad—war is! I never want to live to see nary' nother war to have to go through hit."

Mrs. Snell now rose and prepared to go out and give her chickens their evening feed. She limped and used a cane. "Hit's my foot," said she. "We been havin' bad weather hyar till lately. Hit sot in an' rained, an' rained, an' rained. Hit's tolerable muddy when hit rains, an' I slipped in the mud an' give my foot a sprain."

As she picked her slow way across the yard, I started back through the woods to the settlement. The trees were feathering into leafage, and the forest was brightened with blossoming shrubbery—dog-wood, honeysuckle, "ivory," and redbud. The last

was especially conspicuous — every bush a pink cloud of bloom. When I came into the open, I found Mr. Shenton's grandsons "sprouting in the new ground,"



Returning from the Hen-house

that is, cutting brush on land where the timber had been recently cleared off. They were piling up the rubbish and burning it. Two of the smaller boys had manufactured hickory whistles, and piped on those

more than they sprouted. Clearing new ground was a common occupation at this season among the farmers, and the crackling brush heaps seemed like altar fires of spring — sacrificial offerings to the deities of nature to secure an abundant harvest. Blue smoke-drifts arose from many a field, and the whole quiet evening landscape was veiled in gauzy haze.

V

IN THE TENNESSEE MOUNTAINS



A Drink at the Spring

THE eastern portion of Tennessee is a wilderness of forest and tortuous valleys and rude ridges, and where these ridges lift themselves highest, on the extreme borders of the state, they are known as the Great Smoky Mountains. Thither I journeyed and found a stopping-place at a large, white, two-story house on Wolf Creek. The house stood beside an old highway that went through the mountain

valleys from Tennessee to North Carolina, and it had been a tavern previous to the building of the railroad.

In those old days the thoroughfare which now seemed so quiet was enlivened with constant traffic, and the dwellers along the way could rarely look out on it and not see some passing team or horseback rider.



An Old-time Tavern

The tavern had a broad porch with a balcony above, extending nearly its whole length, and there was a passage through the middle to an ornamental garden in the rear, where were flowers and paths and many quaintly trimmed clumps of boxwood. At a little remove were several ruinous log cabins that had been the slave quarters before the war. The valley was narrow, and round about were tumbled hills, and be-

yond the hills rose rugged mountain ranges bristling with interminable forest. This was the first genuine mountain country I had seen in the South, and I found it delightful.

While I was sojourning here, an elderly man by the name of Gliddon was one day present at dinner. He was an old friend of the tavern family, and, after we had eaten, he and my landlord sat a long time visiting on the porch, and I sat with them. It was uncommonly hot out in the sunshine, and the cool comfort of the porch was very agreeable. Two young collies were frisking about the yard with intervals of lolling in the shade. A colony of English sparrows twittered from some ivy-grown tree trunks of the garden, a peabody-bird whistled in the woodland, and Wolf Creek, only a few rods distant, tinkled musically along over its stone-strewn course.

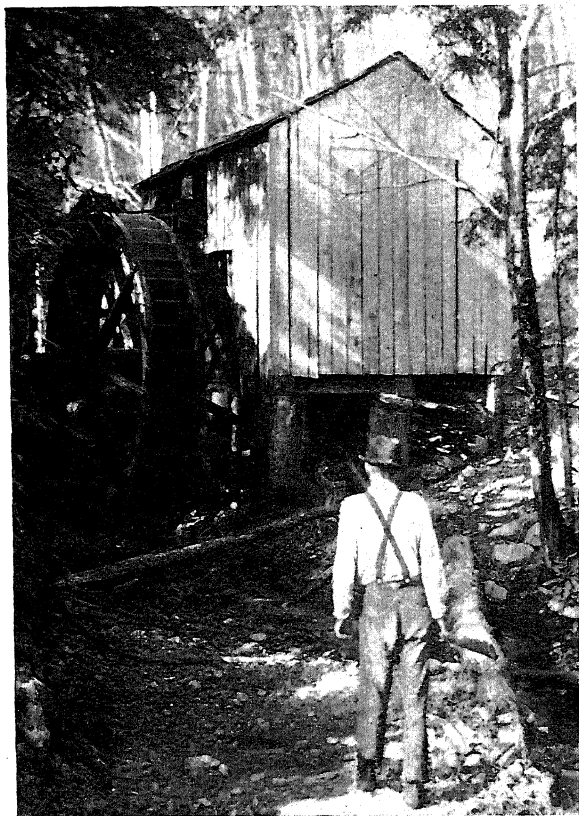
My companions were valley folk, though living on the wilderness borders. But the wilderness was nowhere what it had been fifty or even twenty-five years ago. "The bears used to carry off my grandfather's hogs right here on this place," said my landlord. "Yes, and we've had wolves and panthers in the valley within twenty years."

Now these creatures had vanished, and the invading sawmills had pushed into the remotest depths of the woodlands, and had denuded the mountains of all their finest timber.

"Thar's few schools and no facilities back hyar on the Great Smokies," observed Mr. Gliddon, "and yo'd be surprise' how ignorant the people are—even the preachers. Why! some of those preachers don't know a letter in the book—'twould make a dog laugh—their ignorance. But the people are great han's for religion, and it's a common saying they got mo' religion an' less morals than yo'll find anywhere else in the world. Ain't that so, Steve?" asked Mr. Gliddon in conclusion, turning to my landlord.

"Yes," replied Steve, "and I c'n tell you a story to illustrate it. Over on Pigeon River thar's a man that claim he been dead and come to life. He say he went to heaven for half an hour, and he met Christ there, and the man, he tell Christ about the road he had come, an' how lonesome it was, and he ask Christ if that was raelly the road to heaven. 'Hit was all grass-grown,' he say. 'Hit mus' be ve'y few ever go to heaven if that the road,' he say. And Christ say, 'Yes, that the road to heaven, but that not the only road. That jus' the road from East Tennessee.'

"To my thinkin', though," Steve continued, "the people here don't begin to be so rough as they are over the line in North Carolina; and the women there are worse than the men. Lots o' those North Carolina women will take a man an' whack him all about. They awful people for the law there, too, and always suing. I never did see the like."



A Mountain Mill

“Thar’s some good people over in North Carolina,” commented Mr. Gliddon, “but thar ain’t enough of ’em. That’s puttin’ it putty strong, perhaps, an’ I don’t know but I ought to say what Uncle Ned

Cooper always say at the end of his speak at prayer-meetin': 'Brethren,' says he, 'if I've said anythin' amiss to-day I hope you and the Lord will forgive me.'"

"Uncle Ned has his own way of talking," observed Steve, "but for downright queerness of talk the mountain folks beat all. The other day a man was down here after the doctor, an' he say, 'Doctor, my wife done drap dead. I want yo' to come an' see her.'

"And the doctor say, 'If she's dead, you don't want me, you want the coroner.'

"'No,' the feller says, 'she ain't *plumb* dead. She only *drap* dead.' He meant she'd fainted."

"Some o' those mountain girls look almost like varmints," said Mr. Gliddon, "and I don't reckon they've been washed in their lives; but you educate 'em an' give 'em a chance, an' they come out fine appearin' women."

"You was speakin' of a yoke of steers you wanted to sell," remarked Steve, after a pause. "Have they been broke?"

"No. Two or three fellers have wanted to break 'em, but I was afraid they'd break their necks. I should think you could use an extry yoke of critters to advantage if yo're goin' to work that stony land up the creek you ploughed lately. What you calculate to do thar, anyway?"

"I'm goin' to put in corn."

"By gosh! that won't do. I'll insure I'll carry all the corn yo'll raise thar on my back. The land's too pore, and it's too stony. I reckon your blacksmith's bill for keepin' your plough sharp while you was ploughin' in them stones must 've amounted to mor'n the corn 'll be worth."

Steve's wife had come to the door. "That's what I think," she declared. "That's what I been tellin' him."

"Well, it's no use," Mr. Gliddon responded. "I know Steve. He's strong-headed, Steve is, and yo' cain't do nothing with him. But he won't never raise corn again on that land, even if he gets a good crap this fall. It's too near that thar place up thar whar they make blockade whiskey. Those moonshiners air boun' to steal every year of corn they c'n lay hands on within five mile of their still, no matter how honest they air. I found out whar that thar still is some time ago, and they hadn't any objection, because they know I'd jus' be bus' wide open befo' I'd tell."

"Blockade whiskey is the only whiskey made that's fit to drink," said Steve, judicially. "It's pure. It ain't pizen, like the doctored whiskey that's paid the government revenue."

I gathered from Mr. Gliddon's and Steve's conversation that illicit distilling went on about the same it had for many years. Comparatively little of the whiskey is taken out of the mountains, and the distillers do not

find its production very profitable under present conditions. They continue as poor as ever, yet in their view the manufacture is one of their rights, and they will persist in it. Steve affirmed that if the government would spend the money it now spends ferreting out the moonshiners for education in the same region; it would accomplish much more in destroying the business than it does. He did not think the revenue



In an Upland Corn-field

officers were very effective. It was almost impossible for them to find the stills unless some moonshiner betrayed his fellows, and frequently the officers were more intent on getting profit out of their labors than in really destroying the stills. They are paid a certain sum for each successful foray, and "they will take a hack out of a still" to show for the purpose of getting their reward, and leave the still in shape to be readily put in order again. After a while they make another raid on the same still, hack out a piece of the worm, and secure a second reward. One local still had been broken up thus five times.

"If I ain't mistaken, I heered some one sayin' that youngest Beasley was married yesterday," remarked Mr. Gliddon, changing the subject.

"Yes," replied Steve, "married Hannah Hosford."

"Lor' a mercy! Did she take him? He's plumb shiftless, an' thar never was an honest Beasley yet. She knew what he was, too, an' had all the chance in the world to get shet of him. Well, women jus' will be cheated. It was two of them Beasleys killed Widow Miffin's cow years ago, when I was squire. They had some grudge agin the widow, an' they took the cow an' tied its legs together an' rolled it down a bluff into the river. Thar wa'n't a bone in its body but what was broke. The case was tried before me. I didn't quite like that, because the Beasleys had always voted for me an' the Miffin's had always voted agin me. But I

wouldn't 'a' found in favor of my best brother under the circumstances, an' I gave the widow a judgment for twenty dollars. Later, Dave Beasley, who was the worst of the two that did that trick with the widow's cow, was lodged in the penitentiary after bein' caught with his pockets full of that 'ar counterfeit gold that was made up on Big Creek."

"Dave was a bad citizen," my landlord commented, "and Alf Weems is another of the same sort."

"That's so," echoed Mr. Gliddon. "Thar ain't a dangder scoundrel ever trod shoe-leather. Yet I sort o' like him. I cain't help it. He ain't no coward. He'd hit ary man on earth that went contrary to him. I ricolect when he was so pore he wa'n't worth a nickel, but he's jus' got the dough now. You know where it come from. We ain't so particular about honesty as we use' to be. I swear to goodness, when I was a boy, if a man was ketched stealin', he was kicked out of every decent crowd."

"Wa'n't it Alf's father that Bill Jackson shot in Arkansaw?" Steve inquired.

"Yes," was Mr. Gliddon's response, and then he told how in some gambling affair twelve men had assaulted Bill's father and killed him, and how Bill took it on himself to be avenged, and at last he succeeded in killing every one of the twelve, even following and searching out one in "Arkansaw" and another in Texas.

This episode recalled to Steve the lawless violence that prevailed in war time and the years immediately



Evening on the Porch

following. "Everything was mixed up then," he explained. "Some of our people around here fought on

the Union side and some on the Southern side, families were divided, and the feuds growing out of the war made trouble for a long time. In the war we never knew what was goin' to happen. We'd have Union soldiers stopping at our house in the morning and perhaps Rebels at night. Then there was a guerilla band made their headquarters in the valley. They were a wild crowd. Some of 'em had deserted from the Rebels and served with the Yankees, and when that didn't suit 'em, they had deserted again and become guerillas. They never hesitated to attack twice their number, and they were constantly capturing Yankee scouting parties. There was as many as twenty-five of 'em at first, but they got killed off, so by the end of the war only about half a dozen of 'em was left."

"They was up to all sorts of devilment," Mr. Gliddon affirmed, "an' the people on their own side here didn't like 'em much better than the Yankees did. You remember that 'ar guerilla named Fowler, an' how he was at the blacksmith's shop one day when Tom Allen hollered for Lincoln? Fowler picked up a piece of iron an' hit Tom, an' Tom fell down dead. I was a Rebel an' always expect to be, but I didn't approve of that. It was a cold-blooded murder. However, thar wa'n't nothin' done about it, an' the nex' year Fowler shot in among some girls while he was drunk. He went home, an' that feller Carleton follered him. Fowler had gone up to the gallery an' was lyin' asleep

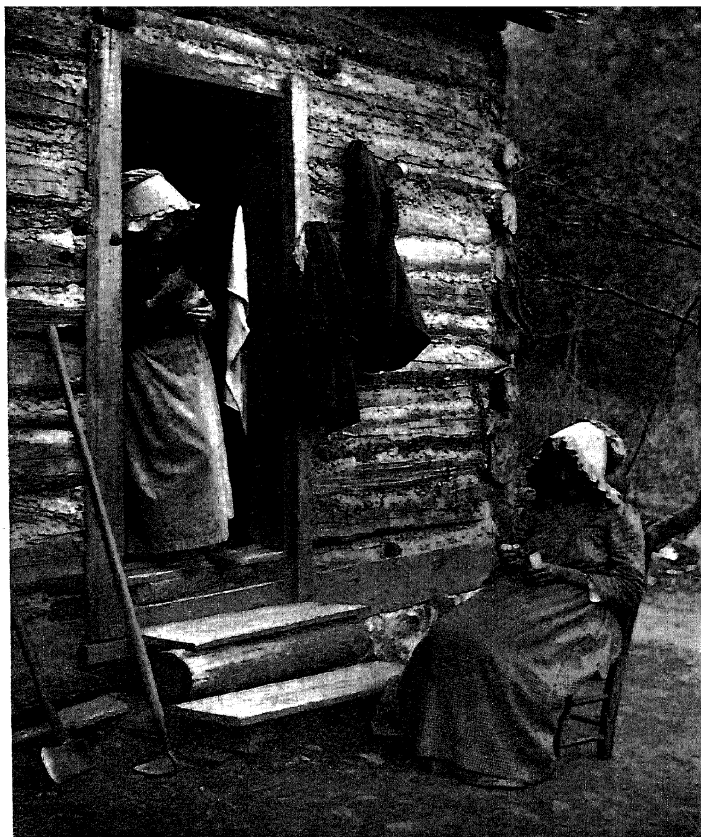
in a hammock, an' Carleton climbed up a ladder an' grab Fowler by the leg an' begun a jerkin' of him, an' when he woke up, Carleton killed him. Well, he needed killin'. He was jus' nachully mean. The other guerillas took his body an' had a funeral. They tried to hold kind of a religious service, an' when they was gathered round the grave, they wanted to sing a hymn, but it's told that they didn't know none, so they sang their favorite war song:—

“ ‘ I'll eat when I'm hungry, I'll drink when I'm dry,
And if the Yankees don't ketch me I'll live till I die. ’ ”

The next day succeeding the afternoon that I spent on the old tavern porch I set forth up the creek into the mountains. The road was very bad. It was narrow and often steep, and in places so rough and stony as to seem almost impassible. The stream should have been clear and there should have been speckled trout in its pools; but so much sawdust had been “ throwed into the creek by the sawmills that the water was right sickly,” and the fish that once swarmed had died off. The choppers had cleared the slopes on either hand pretty thoroughly, yet a good many trees had been left in the more inaccessible depths of the gorge, and the finest of them were a delight to the eyes, they were so tall and stalwart and straight-stemmed. What a wonderful architect nature is in fashioning these pillars for her forest temples!

One mill was still at work in the valley — a rude, temporary affair environed by heaps of sawdust and great piles of freshly sawed, odorous lumber; and near by was a cluster of shanties occupied by the help and the mule teams. As I went on I began to find some of the little farms of the natives. The houses were low structures of logs. I stopped at one of them. It was across the stream from the road. In mid-creek a log was lodged and served as a support for a plank, extending to it from either shore. I went over to the dwelling by this plank footbridge. Several women and children were sitting out in front and the entire convention appeared to be engaged in absorbing nicotine from their snuff-dips. They were very cordial and a chair was vacated for me. Less promiscuous rubbish than is usual lay about the place, and for this dearth apology was made on the score that the family had only moved in "Sunday was a week ago." They had brought their goods five miles over the mountain on a sled shod with wooden runners, and the vehicle, according to the matron of the home group, had slipped along "tolerable well on smooth groun'; but I tell you where hit was rough hit jus' went bumpity bump. I brought the chickens myself," she continued. "I took a stout cord and tied 'em by the legs, half at one end of the cord and half at the other end, and so balanced 'em over my shoulder."

While we talked a number of pigs were industri-



DIPPING SNUFF

ously rooting close by, but now one came and gave an investigating poke to the dog which was lying stretched comfortably beside the doorstep. That roused the dog's temper and there was an uproar of growls and squeals and shouts of "Tige, yo' leave that pig alone — don't be so smart!"

The sky had been growing dull and threatening, and when I resumed my journey, the slender shut-in trail among the great trees was very gloomy. Soon the road began to climb in a steep zigzag up a mountain side and for miles I was in uninterrupted forest and met not a soul; but when I reached the uplands and was among the rolling summits of the Great Smokies, there were habitations once more and occasional little patches of cleared land.

The mountain cabin in which I found shelter was the home of a family named Hudnut. It was fully twice as commodious as the average houses of the region and had four rooms in the body of the house, and a cook-room in a semi-detached ell. Only the last was supplied with windows and the others were cavernously dark. The living room had an enormous fireplace, built of rough stones gathered from the fields. Stones of the same sort had been used in laying the hearth which projected, uneven and deeply creviced, well out into the room. The log walls were partially pasted over with newspapers. The cook-room was simply a smoke-blackened, board-walled shed. In a

corner was a little stove propped up on blocks and the pipe was run out through the boarding. Near the stove was the corn-meal chest. This was replenished "wunst a week," for the mountain families like to have their meal fresh. Some carried the grist on horseback, some on steerback, others on their own shoulders. It was no great burden, a half bushel being usually as much as was needed.

The life of the mountain people was very primitive, and a large proportion of their needs was supplied by their own fields and pastures. Woolwheels were in common use for spinning stocking-yarn, and the old hand-loom was still operated in occasional families for the production of homespun. The crops raised were corn, Irish and sweet potatoes and sorghum, with perhaps a few cabbages and other of the ordinary garden vegetables. There might be a little surplus in some of these crops that was sold, but in the main the people depended on the butter, eggs, chickens, and turkeys they carried to the valley to obtain the few store goods that seemed essential. Blackberries, huckleberries, and raspberries were plentiful, and the women picked what they chose to use. They could have marketed great quantities had their situation been less remote.

One evening as I was sitting down with the Hudnuts to supper in the cook-room, a man walked in with a gun. "Howdy, howdy, Andy—howdy, Mag," was

his greeting to Mr. and Mrs. Hudnut, and he was invited to draw up to the table and eat. Before he accepted this invitation, he took from his pocket a small bottle wrapped in paper and put it on the shelf. The bottle contained sweet oil, and he had walked twenty miles that day to get it. I soon learned that he was a mountain genius. He wandered about making his home with this family or that wherever night chanced to find him, he helped some with the farm work, he shot wild game with his gun, and he found desultory employment as a physician. His specialty in the last rôle was a stomach and backache medicine and cures for rheumatism and dropsy, all of his own manufacture. The sweet oil was an ingredient for one of these medicines, and he mentioned also using "mullein and evergreen biled together" and "a yearb called golden seal."

"I golly, I've cyored a heap with them medicines," the doctor declared. "I've knowed people swole up with the dropsy till they mos' ready to bu'st, and their minds made up they wa'n't long for this kentry, and then I've cyored 'em."

"The slickest cyore yo' ever did," remarked Andy, "was of 'Lish' Walford's boy."

"Yes," acknowledged the doctor, "he was a awful sick chile when I got to the house, and he was too small to tell what the matter was; but I made out the trouble was in his stomach, and I ask his folks a few

questions, and it appear he'd been playin' with the cat. I knew then right off he'd been swallerin' some cat hairs. So I give him an epidemic, and he threw up, and in a little while he was well as ever. You was thar, Mag," the doctor said, turning to Mrs. Hudnut. "Wa'n't that the way of it?"

"He was sure cyored," replied Mag.

At length the doctor glanced toward me with the inquiry, "Where mought you have come from?"

"I'm from Massachusetts," I responded.

"Massachusetts," repeated Mag, doubtfully; "I 'low I'll look that thar up on the map sometime. I'd like to see jus' whar that is."

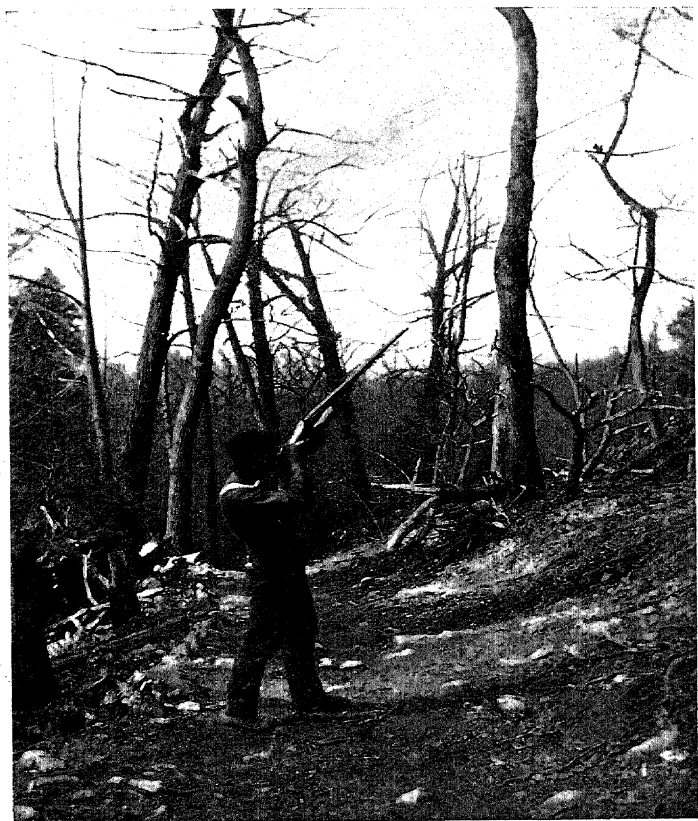
"Is it near Kansas?" asked Andy.

"You have to cross a part of the ocean to get to Kansas from Tennessee, I believe," said Mag.

"Thar was a Massachusetts man hyar year befo' las'," announced the doctor, "an' he say hit was two thousan' miles from hyar to thar; an' he say they had deep snow thar six months in the year; an' he say a man couldn't marry thar unless he had three or fo' hundred dollars and a house."

"Hit seem like to me," said Andy, "yo' not find it very easy going home thar's so many roads and cross-roads. I'd be afeard I'd lose the way and never git thar."

"The farthest I ever went was over near Ashville in North Carolina," the doctor remarked. "I wanted to



AN INHABITANT OF THE MOUNTAINS

see the house Vanderbilt got over thar an' I started early an' I walked plumb thar agin dark — sixty-five mile. That thar house is made of square rocks, all as white as chalk."

"Thar's some people hyar been good long journeys," said Andy, "and others hain't. Thar's an ole woman at the nex' house up the road was raised on t'other side of Brushy Mountains, and when she married she moved over to this side an' ain't been anywhar else."

After supper we went into the living room. On one of the beds lay the baby. "Ah, little Joe, little Joe," the doctor said caressingly; "ain't he like his daddy?"

On the other bed sat a sleepy small boy about four years old, and when his mother came in from her work in the cook-room, she slipped off his trousers and tucked him into the bedclothes. Then she took the baby and sat down beside the fireplace. Two or three crickets were singing on the hearth, cheered by the warmth of the flickering fire. Andy lit a lamp, but it had no chimney, and did not burn very well. He blew out the light and pinched off the charred end of the wick with his fingers. Then he relit it and it behaved better, though it still flared and smoked some.

In the course of our conversation the doctor mentioned going through "Scratchankle."

"What's that?" I asked.

"Hit's the name of a holler whar the chu'ch is, about two mile from hyar."

"And do the people about here all attend church at Scratchankle?" I questioned.

"Yes, everybody that's able. Some walk an' some go on their horses. Mag, she ride thar horse-back an' so do lots of other woman. I go, too, but the preachin' don't suit me. The only place I ever heard religion an' the gospel preached in their purity was at the Methodis' chu'ch over to Shelly Rock five or six year ago. Preacher Brice was thar an' he knowed how to talk, an' people wep' over that sermon an' they weep over hit yet. They had a great rejoicin' an' they prayed an' shouted an' eve'ythin' else an' thar was a heap o' confessions made."

Bedtime comes early among the mountaineers, and we did not linger long around the fire. Rising-time also comes early, and in the first gray of the morning some one entered my apartment and got a gun. When I went out on the porch a half hour later, Andy and the doctor were just returning from the woods whither they had been in quest of some wild turkeys they had heard gobbling. The turkeys escaped them, but they brought in a gray squirrel they had shot. Andy said the squirrels and turkeys were more plentiful than any of the other wild "varmint" of the mountains. He mentioned seeing a "b'ar" the previous winter, and he



Ploughing among the Girdled Chestnuts

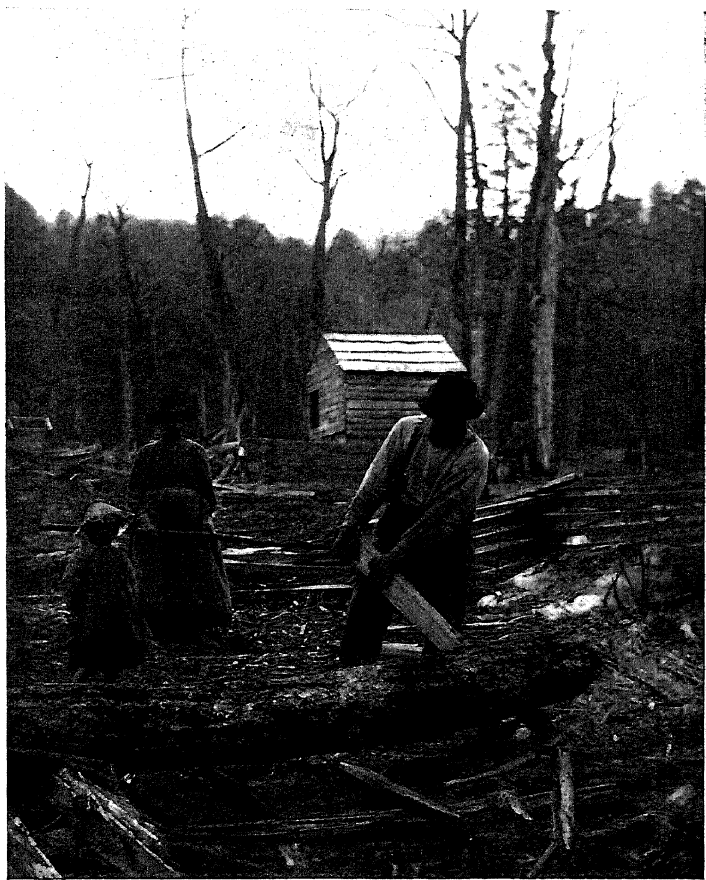
had recently heard the cry of a painter. "Hit's like a woman's cry," said he. "Yo' hear that in the night an' hit 'll raise the ha'r on yore head."

The doctor amplified the list of game by adding "turkle doves, 'possums, and whistlepigs." The whistlepigs, or woodchucks as we would call them in the North, get very fat in the autumn feeding on chestnuts. "You take 'em that time of year," explained the doctor, "and parbile 'em, and pour off the water, and then salt and pepper 'em and bile 'em agin, and after that bake 'em and they're all right. I love a parbiled groundhog, and I've e't a many of 'em. Didn't you ever eat whistlepig?"

"I got to go up over the mountain to-day," said Andy, "to git some roughness" — that is, cow-fodder or hay. "My cattle ain't begun to live yet, and they won't begin to live for two weeks. The season's late and my roughness is clean gone."

I found it was a common complaint in the mountains that the cattle had not begun to live, and this state of affairs would continue until the forest buds got a good start and the cows could be turned out in the woods to browse. As yet the twigs were bare of leafage, and the swelling buds had not thrown off their scales. The only trees that looked really springlike were the occasional maples, or "sugar trees," as they are called. These had tasselled out in light green bloom. "You c'n git good sugar from them trees," Andy informed me. "We made twenty-five pounds of sugar-tree sugar this year."

Evergreens were almost entirely lacking on the heights, and the predominant trees were chestnuts — enormous, big-armed, and patriarchal and seemingly as ancient as the summits on which they grew. I went with Andy in his quest for roughness, and in the midst of the chestnut woods on one of the loftier slopes we stopped to speak with a man who was getting some new land ready for the plough. The settler's wife and little girl were helping him by picking up the smaller rubbish while he rolled the logs out of the way. Most of the trees were yet stand-



PIONEER HOMEMAKERS

ing; but they were dead and bare, for they had been girdled.

The log-house in which the family lived had been recently built and close by it was the hole, still unfilled, whence had been dug the "mud" used to daub the chimney and fill in the chinks between the logs. The outbuildings were only half finished and everything was raw and new. The family were in fact genuine pioneers, carving out a home in the wilderness in just the same way as had the earliest settlers of colonial days.

I asked if the little girl went to school, and the mother replied: "Yes, and she was the least one of 'em all. She's only five year old, and some of the big ones was nineteen or twenty. Hyar, Mary, git down off that thar stump and say yore speech—that one yo' spoke at the exhibition, last day. She's memorized I don't know how many speeches."

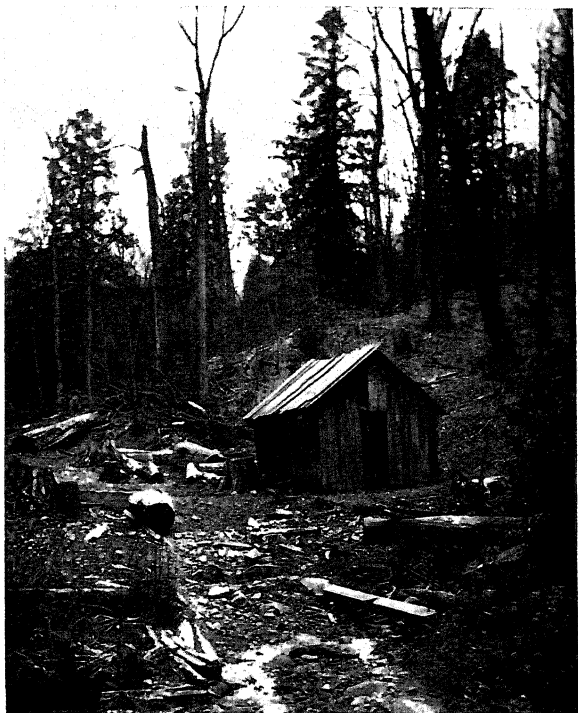
So the little girl came down from the stump and her mother pulled off the child's sunbonnet. Then the tot stood very straight, and in piping monotone recited the jingling verse or two that constituted her "speech."

A mile farther on, in a swampy hollow by the roadside, was the schoolhouse—a lonely forest hut with no dwelling near. The woods around had been much thinned and devastated by the lumbermen, and the schoolhouse had been originally "putt up for the sawmill

hands to shack in." Its predecessor, which was of logs, had fallen down about the time the sawmill finished work in the vicinity, and this little building was left vacant very opportunely and was promptly taken possession of by the school. The structure measured twelve by fourteen feet, and the eaves were barely six feet from the ground. The only furnishings were a tiny blackboard and a few plank benches that had a pair of well-slanted legs inserted at each end. For heating purposes there was a rough stone fireplace, but the walls were full of cracks and some of the boards were missing altogether, so that the fire could not have warmed the room very effectively. However, school did not keep in the winter. The single yearly term was four months long and began the first Monday in August. The last teacher had been a young woman from Shelly Rock. Her salary was twenty dollars a month and out of this she paid a dollar a week for board. I thought she probably helped with the housework at her boarding-place to get so low a rate, but Andy said, "No, all she done was her own washing and ironing on Saturdays."

She brought a chair from home for her personal use at the schoolhouse, the building not being provided with any such luxury, and she took the chair back with her at the end of the term. The last day had been a great occasion, and the mountain folks all turned out to the exhibition. The children trimmed the room

with greenery and made a little bower in one corner and carpeted the floor in that corner with soft moss. On this forest carpet they stood when they said their



A Woodland Schoolhouse

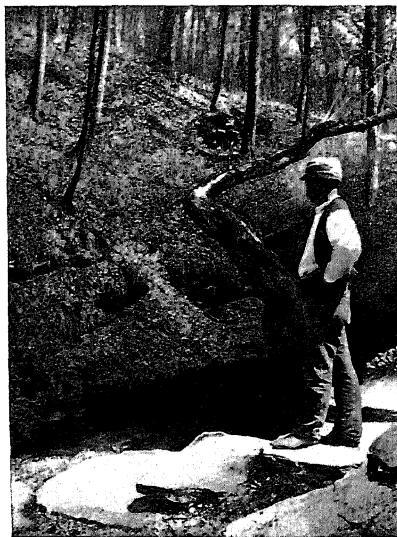
speeches. The scholars numbered twenty-seven and not much spare space was left in the shack for visitors, yet some contrived to squeeze in along the walls and

the rest peered through the breaks and the cracks. To add to the attraction of the exercises one mountaineer brought his fiddle and another a banjo and "played some nice music."

Of all I saw in my wanderings among the Great Smokies nothing remains more vivid than the remembrance of that woodland schoolhouse and of the last day as described by Andy Hudnut. How picturesque that gathering in and about the little building must have been, and how strikingly the interest manifested shows the charm that education has for the mountain people!

VI

THE BIRTHPLACE OF LINCOLN



The Entrance to the Mammoth Cave

ON my way to the Lincoln country I stopped at a dismal little place called Glasgow Junction, and went thence nine miles out into the country to see the Mammoth Cave. A branch railway connects the main line with the cave, but while I was at the junction station, one of the local inhabitants accosted me

and inveigled me into hiring a team. Having made a bargain with me, he went off to his house to hitch up and presently appeared with a dilapidated buggy and an ancient horse garbed in a patched and knotted har-

ness. I think I would have hesitated to trust myself to the dubious conveyance had I known how full of rocks and petrified ruts the road was that we were to travel. The Southern custom is to "work the roads" in the fall, and the tracks cut by the wagon wheels in the winter mud are retained by the clay, which is the most common soil, all through the summer.

The region round about the cave is hilly; but instead of watercourses and ravines, there are numerous rounded, basinlike hollows known as sink-holes. Often the sink-holes are acres in extent. The turf sweeps unbroken to the bottom of the basins, and the rainfall drains away by hidden outlets in the subterranean limestone. Their form and frequency has given the name of "Goose-nest land" to that part of Kentucky where they are most abundant. Some of them contain a pool of water, and these muddy ponds, though small, are frequently deep, and many of them are never dry. The permanent pools have fish in them, and my driver pointed out one in which he reported fish to have been seen as large as a man. Besides these natural pools there were many artificial basins scooped out in the farm barnyards to serve as watering-places for stock, and the creatures that get used to this stagnant liquid prefer it to pure running water, "even if it do git bilin' hot in summer."

The houses I saw along our way were mostly log cabins or small and flimsy frame buildings, and the

land was poor and much overgrown with brushy woods. Once a gray rabbit skipped down the road ahead of us, and then leaped lightly aside into the bushes. My driver pulled up his horse and stepped cautiously out. He whistled enticingly to Bunny who had stopped and was peering at us. The driver picked up a stone and heaved it at the little creature, and the rabbit hastily sought cover.

"I mos' hit him," ejaculated my companion; "and I have killed 'em thataway — I shorely have! Well, I don't care. They not much good this time o' year. The meat too dry. Cold weather, it is best."

My driver had a good deal to say concerning the Mammoth Cave. He told of its river and eyeless fish; of its five levels, the highest series of galleries being three hundred and fifty feet above the lowest; and he told how a cool current of air flows from the cavern in summer, and how the chill outside air of winter is drawn inward. The cave was discovered about one hundred years ago by a hunter, who entered it to secure a wounded bear which had there found shelter; but of course the hunter learned nothing of the cavern's extent. The country was then uninhabited. Later, when the region began to fill up, tradition says that the cave and a hundred acres of land were exchanged for a pony. The next sale was in 1830, when, with five hundred acres, it brought ten thousand dollars. The land alone was perhaps worth a dollar

an acre, but the cave had already begun to be famous and to draw visitors. These visitors now number about six thousand a year.

"There's such a lot of 'em," said my driver, "hit seem like every one git to see it befo' this; but I s'pose new young folks keep growin' up, an' so they keep comin'. We only know the cave got one entrance, but they say an ole darkey wunst went through hit and come out another place 'leven mile away. The people what own the cave didn't want no business done except at the ole entrance, and they bought off the nigger not to tell for seven hundred dollars; and he never did tell, and now he dead and gone.

"Thar's plenty o' folks lived round hyar all their days, an' never been into the Mammoth Cave. We people hyar don't think so much of goin' into a cave as we do of takin' a ride. We all got caves. There's a cave on every farm, and sometimes three or four. I got a right smart little cave on my farm. Hit's two mile long and maybe longer. I ain't seen hit all yit. I go in thar wunst in a while, and I always have to be careful to take a newspaper with me an' tear it up an' drap the pieces along, so't I c'n fin' my way back. You see this house we're passin', and that bunch o' bushes nex' the gyardin. Thar's a cave in them bushes. They started to dig a well thar, an' the bottom fell out, and they found the cave. An ole nigger lives in that house alone with one little nigger



BESIDE THE POTOMAC

boy. He kind of crippled, and las' winter, when the weather come on col', he couldn't git wood, an' he burned up two cheers and a basket."

To visit the Mammoth Cave you must apply at a big hotel near the entrance. This hotel is the only building in the vicinity. It is a low, old-fashioned, rambling structure with a skirting of wide verandas, and all around is the forest. The path to the cave leads into a deep, wooded glen, and there you find a gaping hole—a hole that would engulf a good-sized house. The path continues down the grassy slope of the gentler side of the aperture, and then a low, black passage slants at a slight incline down into the earth.

I spent several hours in the cave, yet I cannot say that I found it anywhere inspiring or charming. It was stupendous and curious, and at the same time grewsome and melancholy and colorless—everywhere those dull gray walls stained with patches of black, while underfoot was hard, reddish dirt like the fine silt of a river-bed, and a strewing of broken rock. In places my guide conducted me through narrow crevices, or we stooped along under a low-hanging roof, or loitered in lofty galleries, or we crossed wooden bridges spanning yawning chasms and "bottomless" pits. These pits, however, never failed to reveal a bottom when the guide tossed down a bit of flaming cotton. Most of the cave is quite dry. The roof is too good to allow the percolating water much

chance to beautify the dull passages with frescoings of stalactites and vistas of fluted columns. What interested me most in the cave was its connection with life. For instance, there were bats flitting in the gloomy channel at the entrance and clinging to the walls of the near galleries by thousands. Here they hibernate, but they were beginning to arouse themselves from their long sleep, and in a few days would all be gone to the outer world for the summer. Then there were numerous remains of old vats and wooden piping used in 1812 in manufacturing nitre for gunpowder from the cavern earth, the process consisting of leaching the earth with water to dissolve the nitre and then boiling down the resulting solution. You can even see in the hard dirt the old-time cart tracks and the print of ox hoofs. In one passage are two or three substantially built habitations which were the homes for five months in 1842 of thirteen consumptives. The cave temperature is always just fifty-four degrees, and the consumptives hoped the unchanging coolness and atmospheric quiet would be beneficial. What a forlorn time they must have had in that noiseless, gloomy tomb! How depressing the unending night! One died in the cave and the others came out unhelped.

The cavern walls are scratched with names, and the lower ceilings are lettered with sooty candle smoke that is more imperishable here than the deepest chiselling in rocks exposed to the open air. In many places

along the passages are cairns of stones, one for every state and nation and fraternal order, and for every large party that has visited the place. The most romantic of the rooms was one containing a "bridal altar" formed by a group of columns. At this altar a dozen or more couples have been married. The first couple chose this place because the young woman had vowed she "would not marry any man on the face of the earth."

Once my guide took all the lights and left me in the dense, silent darkness. Such a void I had never been in, and he was gone so long I began to wonder what I could do if he failed to return. It would be absolutely hopeless trying to find one's way out of that black labyrinth of one hundred and fifty miles. The guide had gone into a side passage, and when he reappeared he manipulated his light so as to simulate the sunrise, and he added to the effect by imitating the crowing of a rooster and the flapping of its wings. This and much else was odd and interesting; but nothing I saw or experienced made me desire to protract my stay in those dismal depths, and I was not sorry when we returned to the upper world with its life-giving sunlight, its breezes and shifting skies, its flowers and green foliage.

Now that I had seen the great cave I went in search of the birthplace of the most beloved of American presidents — Abraham Lincoln. He began life about sixty miles south of Louisville in central Kentucky.

There, near Hodgenville, his father bought a little farm and built a humble cabin, and this cabin was



Hodgenville

the future president's home for four years. Hodgenville is the county seat, but it is not much of a place — just a few stores and shops grouped around a two-story brick court-house that adjoins an open square of hard-trodden earth. On the square the country people hitch their horses to some lines of railings set up there for the purpose. Possibly a third of the horses are attached to vehicles and the rest merely saddled. Many of them had colts tagging about them at the time of my spring visit, and the rustic look of the village was farther emphasized by numerous cows

that wandered through or lingered in the streets. Once while I was in the town there was an alarm of fire. I heard the sudden shouts, and then the clanging of the court-house bell, and I saw wisps of smoke rising through the roof of a dwelling that stood among the village stores. The public ways were immediately full of people, running and excited, and a group of citizens appeared from somewhere with ladders and a hand engine. Everybody who could caught hold of a rope attached to the engine and rushed the machine with great clatter and tumult over to a well in the square. Then the hose was hitched on, and a half-dozen men on each side began to work the pumping-bars up and down. This display of energy was too much for the fire, and it promptly succumbed, and the engine and hose were left for the boys to play with the rest of the day.

The region around Hodgenville is one of broad, cultivated fields and grazing land, intermitting with patches of oak and hickory forest. Everywhere are scattered farm-houses, and the older ones are constructed of logs. The spot where formerly stood the Lincoln cabin is three miles from the town, in the middle of a big pasture. A rough pole has been set up to mark the site. This pole is at the top of a slight rise with locust thickets near by, and down the hill is what is known as "The Lincoln Spring." No doubt the place for the dwelling was selected with a view to being con-

venient to this water-supply. The spring is at the bottom of a sink-hole, where the underlying limestone has given way and left a ragged chasm about a dozen feet deep. The break exposes an outjutting ledge on one side, while on the other is a steep slope of earth



The Site of the Lincoln Cabin

and shattered stone. Close around grow numerous bushes and trailing vines, and the hollow is cast in

pleasant shadow by a few fine trees. How many times Lincoln's mother must have come hither to fill her water-pails, and how often the little boy must have toddled down to this cool retreat, and dabbled about and played with the ungainly crawfish that inhabit the spot!

While I was sitting beside the spring, a young man came from his work in a neighboring field to get a drink, and he called my attention to the manner in which the rivulet trickled from a crevice in the ledge and almost immediately disappeared into some hidden passage deeper down. "I reckon thar's a cave down under hyar," said he. "You'd think so, if you was to see the water that po's in hyar sometimes. Thar's quite a piece o' country dreans into this hole. When we have a heavy rain a regular crick comes runnin' in hyar, and the hole gets plumb full, way up over the rocks. Then thar's a big whirlpool, and bubbles and foam, and a noise like thunder."

The spring is a favorite resort for warm-weather pleasure parties for miles around; but occasional strangers from distant states also make pilgrimages to this lonely Kentucky pasture. The young fellow whom I quoted in the preceding paragraph often met these strangers, for his father rented and lived on the Lincoln farm. Their arrival was, in some instances, very unexpected and untimely. "Thar was a man last fall," my acquaintance explained, "who come to

the house after it was dark. He was from Indiany, and he said he'd got to get back right away. That evening was his only chance to see Lincoln's birthplace, he said, so I took him down hyar. The moon was shinin', and he looked aroun', and he noticed how this clift jut out like a roof and that you could almost stand under it, and he ask, 'Now, don't you s'pose the Lincolns lived under this clift while they was buildin' their house?' "

The log cabin erected by Lincoln's father still exists, but it has not occupied its original site for a long time. From the pasture it was moved about a mile toward Hodgenville, and rebuilt on a bank close beside the highway. The farmer who last lived in it told me he sold it to a Northern man for enough to erect himself a good frame house, and he thought he "got the best of the bargain"; for it was a poor little one-room affair, badly decayed, and worth practically nothing as a dwelling. Now it is a wandering show. It was one of the attractions at the Chicago Exposition, and has been at several other great fairs; but the knoll near the spring where it was in Lincoln's babyhood is the place for it, and one cannot help hoping it will return and be permanently located there. The only reminders of it still to be found on the spot are a few stones that were in the old hearth, and some fragments of half-baked clay from the chimney. Even these are likely to disappear soon, carried off bit by bit by predatory relic hunters.



A Pail of Water from the Lincoln Spring

From the spring a well-trodden path leads away far up the eastern slope to the present-day Lincoln farmhouse, and shortly after the young man from the near field had gone back to his work, two little girls came down the path with a pail between them which they were going to fill with water. They said their names were Ivory Goldy Burton and Vesty Opal Burton, and

that all the water the family used came from the spring, except what fell on the roof and was caught in rain barrels set under the eaves spouts. I returned with them, and arranged with their mother to become a lodger at the Lincoln farmhouse.

The house was in poor repair, the roof was leaky, window lights were gone, and the floors were warped and shaky. The walls were of logs, but these had been long ago covered from sight with clapboards. No outer painting had ever been done, and the clapboards were extremely weatherworn and loose. In the yard were various rude structures put up for the hens, geese, and turkeys, and near the back door was a receptacle full of recently leached ashes, and a kettle of new-made soft soap that was awaiting a convenient time for transferring it to the dwelling.

One day during my stay it rained. Mr. Burton rapped on my door at early dawn, and as soon as I was fairly awake, I heard the steady drive of the storm outside. Heavy, lowering clouds cast a pall of gloom over the earth, and we ate our five-o'clock breakfast by lamplight. That done I sat by the dining-room fireplace and whiled the hours away.

They passed very agreeably on the whole, and I caught many interesting glimpses of home life on a Kentucky farm. The room walls were stout oak logs chinked with clay and whitewashed. They were ornamented with two antique lithographs and a handsaw.

The upper sash of the single window was gone, and the blank filled by nailing on pieces of boards. In one corner of the apartment was a bureau, in another a double-barrel shot-gun, in each of the other two a bed. Southern families are, as a rule, large, and in the average house you are likely to find a bed or two in every room, except possibly the cook-room. The older Burton children had flown from the home nest, and there remained the son Jed, and the two little girls I had met at the spring, and two other girls who were in their teens.

As soon as we finished breakfast, the older girls turned back the white table-cloth enough to make space for a pan and washed the dishes. Then they swept the floor and put the house to rights, and afterward one of them produced some fancy work and seated herself next the window. She was making a rug. The foundation was a guano bag and the superstructure was of rags, too short for carpet rags, and too small for use in a patchwork quilt. These fragments she drew through the bagging and left the ends sticking up. Vesty Opal, barefooted and tousled, dreamily knelt for a half hour on the hearth and poked the fire with the tongs. At the back of the fireplace were smouldering logs, but in front was a brisk blaze lending a ray of cheer to the gloomy room. Ivory Goldy did not get up to breakfast. She lay sleeping in one of the dining-room beds. When she finally crawled

forth, she made out a meal of such things as she could lay her hands on, and presently she and Vesty Opal each procured an ear of corn, shelled their laps full, and played "Hully-gully." Ivory Goldy would take up a few kernels, close her fingers over them, hold out her hand, and say "Hully-gully."

"Handful," says Vesty Opal.

"How many?" asks Ivory Goldy.

Vesty Opal guesses, and if right, gets the corn. If she overestimates, she has to make up to the quantity named. If she underestimates, she gets what is over the number guessed. They played until they were tired, and then threw the corn out of the door to the chickens which had congregated in a narrow, covered passage between the dining room and cook-room.

Mrs. Burton, who had been in the cook-room working and singing hymns, now returned to the dining room. She brought with her from the passageway a "crazy chicken" and wrapped it up in an apron, and put it on the bureau in the hope that warmth and quiet would restore it to sanity. "The air is right chilly," she remarked. "I reckon this must be the dogwood winter. We always have a cold spell when the dogwood is in blossom, and that's what we call it. Then, later, when the blackberries are in blossom, we have another cold spell what we call the blackberry winter."

"This rain 'll make the water high at the fords," said the daughter with the fancy work.

There were few bridges in the region and the fords were treacherous whenever the streams were flooded. "Our little creeks are up in a hurry," Mrs. Burton explained. "I'll never forget an accident that happened over on the Rolling Fork. There was a man had come with his family from a good distance, and he was going to visit his father who lived on the Rolling Fork, eight miles from hyar just across the ford. The children hadn't never seen their grandpaw, and their father was a-takin' 'em in a one-horse surrey. It had been rainin', and before he come to the ford he ask a man if the water was up, and the man say 'No.' But the water *was* up; and he drove right in, and his horse and all his family was drownded. He was the only one got out; and the next day they found the bodies of the children and buried 'em."

About the middle of the morning Mr. Burton and Jed came in from the barn where they had been shucking some corn and shelling it by hand to take to mill. A dog slunk in with the men and lay down on the hearth to enjoy the heat. "I wish it would quit raining," Mr. Burton observed. "I want to finish breaking ground."

"I cain't hardly hold pappy, he so anxious to get started fishing," affirmed Jed.

"Yes," corroborated Mrs. Burton, "he's the smartest lazy man I ever see—workin' hisself to death to get to go a-fishin'. He an' our nex' neigh-

bor, they boun' to make a fishin' trip together every spring. Soon as plantin's done, they drive away off across country into the woods and camp a whole week."

"Pappy has a big time then, shore!" Jed commented.

"Harry Vetts was shootin' suckers Thursday, as they come over the riffle just below the mill," said Mr. Burton, "and he was gettin' lots of 'em, too."

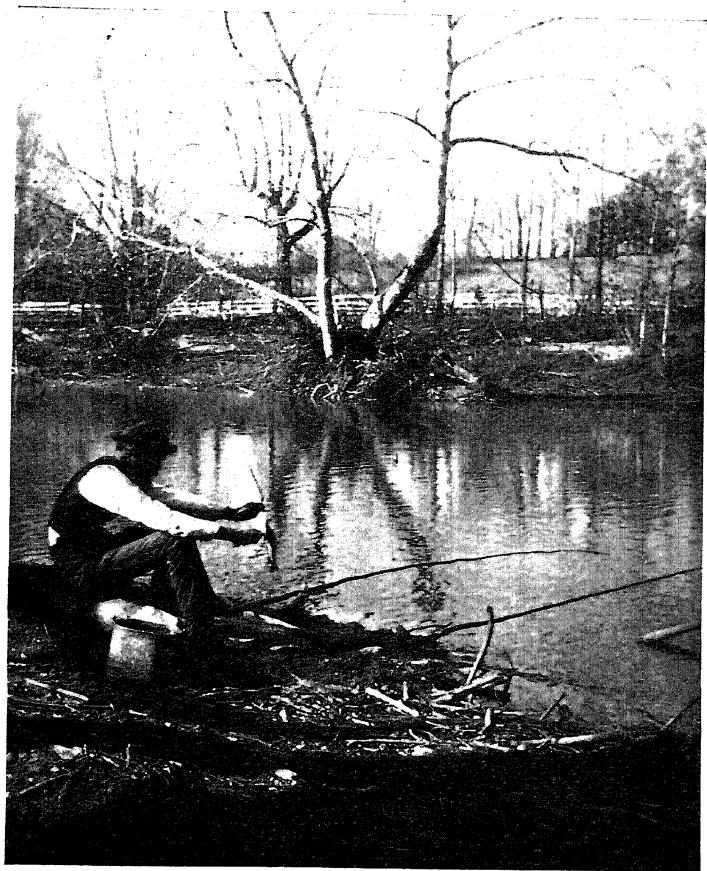
"Did Harry say anything about tradin' horses?" inquired Jed.

"He tol' me he traded six times in one day when he was in Hodgenville las' week, and brought back the same horse he started with, but he didn't say whether he got any profit out of his deals."

"Harry wants to make money without work," declared Mrs. Burton; "and he wants to make it by the armful, and he'll never do it. Ever'body aroun' hyar like to trade horses. They do for a fact. But Harry, he's the greatest feller at it of all."

"Well, you cain't make much just farmin'," said Mr. Burton, "and there's gettin' to be more renters and less owners every year."

"I reckon the Dudley boys make enough," Mrs. Burton suggested; "but then, see how they live. There's four of 'em, and they're all single and it's likely they always will be, for the youngest one is over fifty. They work harder than any renter and go



THE FISHERMAN

worse lookin', and they deny themselves ever' privilege on earth excep' that of hoarding up money."

"If it cl'ars off, I'll plant the rest of those potatoes in the garden, Mis' Tilly," remarked Mr. Burton to his wife. "Mis' Tilly" was a pet condensation of Mrs. Matilda. She, in turn, was apt to call him "Billy."

"No," said she, "you'll have to wait till nex' week. The moon ain't right now. I'm a great hand to garden in the moon," she added, turning to me. "Things that grow under ground like potatoes and carrots want to be planted in the dark of the moon; and things like beans and peas, that grow above ground, want to be planted in the light of the moon. You can start potatoes side by side, some planted in the dark of the moon and some in the light of the moon, and those planted in the dark of the moon will be the best ever' time. You know, too, how 'tis with meat. Take and boil meat that was killed in the rise of the moon—it don't matter when, if it's only killed before the moon fulls, and that meat will be plump as can be; but you boil meat killed in the old of the moon, and it will all shrivel up and there won't be none of it. I'm not superstitious at all, but that is the case."

"You said you wanted to go to town to-morrow, Mis' Tilly, didn't you?" asked Mr. Burton. "How you want to go?"

"I'll go horseback, Billy," was her reply, "though it ain't the style, I know."

"The women aroun' hyar are gettin' to think they cain't ride horseback no more," declared Jed.

"Well, I stopped for a long time myself," said his mother, "but last Christmas was a year ago, my father was took sick, and the easiest way to go to him was horseback. He lived seven mile from hyar and I went two or three times a week and that seem to be what I needed. My health improve at once."

"It shorely done Mammy good goin' to see Grandpap on horseback," remarked Jed.

"Twenty-five years ago nearly ever'one went horseback," Mrs. Burton continued. "But lots of things were different then. Why, we wove our own jeans and flannels and blankets and coverlids, and I often think how all the ole ladies use' to wear caps. I remember just what Grandmaw's was like. She wouldn't 'a' been Grandmaw without her cap."

"In my day of raisin'," added Mr. Burton, "my mother made all her own can'les — made 'em in tin moulds; and we'd thrash our wheat by makin' a floor in the open and spreadin' the bundles on that, and then we children would get on the horses and ride round and round over the wheat and tread out the grain."

Mrs. Burton now went to the cook-room to begin preparations for dinner. The cook-room was a kind of shed annex. Its floor was partly of loose boards, partly of rough earth. Water had trickled in from outside here and there, and Mrs. Burton had been

obliged to move the flour barrel. The wind was blowing and it created quite a breeze as it drew through the many holes and cracks of the walls. Whenever the door was left open the hens walked in, but they were shooed out more or less promptly. The housewife mixed up some biscuit, put a few slices of ham on the spider, and at eleven o'clock we had dinner. Corn bread is a staple in the bill of fare of most Kentucky families — so much so indeed that the country people of the state are often nicknamed "corn-crackers." The average household considers wheat a luxury, and biscuit appear only on Sundays and special occasions; but the Burtons did not care for corn bread. They ate biscuit three times a day the year through, and they disposed of several batches to a meal. The biscuit were always served piping hot, for while one panful was being eaten, another was in the oven.

Early in the afternoon the rain ceased and the clouds lifted and let faint rays of sunlight through. Jed hitched up, and I went with him to mill. On the route we passed a house in which my companion said a woman had recently died. "She was a large, fine-lookin' woman," he explained, "but she died, and we never did know the straight of it no way what was the matter with her, till the doctor told that her lungs was just gorged with snuff, and nothin' in the world killed her but that and the arsenic she'd e't to make her eyes bright. I'd rather 'a' been her, though, than a woman

on the Hodgenville road that uses opium. She's kind o' dazed all the time."

Presently we came to the "Lincoln Spring Schoolhouse," a gray, battered little structure in the woods. It looked as if it had withstood the changing weather of a century, and there was talk of putting up a new one, but the prospect of doing so was not very roseate, for opinion in the "deestrick" was deadlocked as to where the new building ought to be located. Jed said each family with children attending school was supposed to contribute annually a load of wood, but some never brought their load and others were slow about it, so there had been occasions when the supply at the schoolhouse gave out entirely. In that case the master had certain of the scholars go into the surrounding woods and drag out brush, and then an axe was borrowed and they cut the brush into stove length.

The mill to which we journeyed was an ancient wooden structure erected about the time the Lincoln family moved away. The preceding mill stood close by, and one of its millstones served as a doorstep at the front entrance of the house occupied by the Burtons. This stone that helped grind the corn for little Abe's corn bread is one of the few Lincoln relics still preserved on the historic farm.

I was at the Burton's over Sunday and was awakened on the morning of that day by a hammering in the yard. When I went out I found Mr. Burton

tinkering the back gate and his wife superintending. "The ox is in the ditch," said she, referring to the New Testament excuse for Sabbath work where the need is great, "and Billy must mend this gate if it is Sunday. It was broken yesterday, and I couldn't sleep last night



A Wounded Crow

for thinkin' the hogs might come in and turn over my kittle of soft soap. But I s'pose I'd slep' better if it hadn't been for a screech-owl that I could hear somewhere out in the pasture. A screech-owl always make me feel cur'ous. They ain't as bad, though, as whippoorwills. Sometimes a whippoorwill come and sit on the house, and it holler there for hours and cluck ever'

time it holler. That worry me so I could kill 'em all if I had 'em in a sack."

"Are you going to church to-day?" I asked.

"I been layin' for to go," was her response, "but there's a party comin' to Lincoln Spring, and we got to stay and see they don't do no damage. I'm willin' people should come if they are quiet and behave themselves, but I don't like them to come on Sunday to cavort the way some of 'em do."

I walked to church alone, a distance of two miles. The building was a plain, spireless structure of brick in a patch of woodland. Sunday school, which preceded the church service, was just being called to order when I arrived. There were less than twenty-five of us and we gathered in a corner and went through the lesson very perfunctorily. The only deviation from the beaten track consisted in an opinion expressed by our teacher that the Northern Baptist church was on "sandy ground, but the old Southern Baptist church" said he, warmly, "is on the solid rock yet. We don't want any of those Northern new-fangled ideas," and he stepped aside to the pulpit platform where, on a stool, was a pail of water. Our leader took a drink from a tin dipper and returned to his labors. A collection was taken up amounting to eighteen cents. I had contributed a nickel and thus swelled the amount to an unusual size. Apparently no one was expected to give more than a penny, for I



ON THE HIGHWAY

noticed that our leader, after dropping a five-cent piece in the box, took out four cents in change.

We had a few minutes' intermission at the close of Sunday school. Teams and saddle-horses were now arriving from all directions and were being hitched to trees and low-drooping branches in the woods about the church. When service began, the edifice was well filled, and as the people continued to come for an hour, it was crowded by the time we were through. We had prayers by the preacher and by elders of the congregation, we had singing led by a man whose voice rose above the grumbling undertone of the other men's voices and the gentle murmur of the sopranos like a mountain peak among little hills, and we had a vigorous old-fashioned sermon that included a denunciation of "revelry and tripping the fantastic toe." I could hear the horses whinnying and stamping outside and the soft cooing of turtle doves, the chirruping songs of cardinal birds, and the tapping of a woodpecker.

On the women's side of the room gum chewing was prevalent; on the men's side tobacco chewing. I have heard of a Southern church where signs were displayed:—

USE THE CUSPIDORS

DO NOT SPIT ON THE FLOOR

But in this Kentucky church there were neither signs nor cuspidors, and the men kept the dust laid

both between the seats and in the aisles. At the close of the benediction they all gave a final spit, reached for their hats, and went out into the spring sunshine where many of them lit cigars or cigarettes and puffed them while visiting around the church steps. The crowd was slow in dispersing, and the social intercourse following the service was evidently as refreshing as the service itself to most of the worshippers.

I returned to the Burtons', and after dinner the family gathered in the best room. Jed got out his guitar and fingered it meditatively. "Every kid boun' to have a guitar nowadays," remarked Jed's father.

I mentioned that some of the women at the church wore sunbonnets. "Yes," said Mrs. Burton — "black cashmere, most likely, and they're very good, only they smother a body up too much in the heat of summer."

Mrs. Burton inquired about the sermon, and this led to her telling me of "a grand revival" in a little town where she had lived formerly. "They closed business down for two weeks and had continuous services day and night. I was a Methodis' then, but I go the Baptis' church hyar."

"Yo're kind o' like Ole Man Spriggs for changin' churches, Mammy," said Jed.

"No, I ain't," she retorted. "Ole Man Spriggs have belonged to pretty nigh ever' church in this country, and now he's flung out and don't belong to none. He joined the Dunkards last of all. They believe in

baptizin' three times face downwards. He got along very well with 'em till he had a hog got crippled on Sunday. He wa'n't goin' to see that hog wasted if it was Sunday, and he got hot water ready and killed the hog and dressed it. They dealt with him in the Dunkard church for that not overly long ago, and he pulled out."

When my stay on the Lincoln farm came to an end, Jed took me to Hodgenville in his buggy. There had been rain earlier in the day, and the red clay mud in the road was something frightful. If a person walked, it gathered on his shoes in great retarding clods. Nor was there any pleasure in riding, progress was so slow and laborious. The town was crowded, for on days not suited to farm work the men from ten miles around congregate there to trade and talk and loaf. That evening a fight occurred on one of the town byways between a white man and a negro. The combatants were separated, but none too soon according to the white man. "I was jus' fixin' for to cut the nigger's throat when they pulled me off," said he. When I asked how the trouble began, I was told "the nigger was sassy"; and it was generally conceded that any "nigger who was sassy" and had his throat cut in retribution met his just deserts. Some months previous a negro had been taken from the jail and hung to the outside court-house stairs, and this lynching took place only three miles from the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln!

VII

THE BLUE-GRASS COUNTRY



Weeding a Tobacco Bed

NO other section of the South is so famed for its fertility and high state of cultivation as the Blue-grass region of Kentucky. I had always heard of it and had long wished to see it —this land flowing with milk and honey —and I journeyed thither with eager anticipation. I left the railroad at Lexington and at once started on

a long walk out into the rural district surrounding. It was a real satisfaction to see the great smooth fields, and the abounding herds and flocks feeding on the succulent sward. The grazing lands that had been

long undisturbed by the plough were particularly charming. On these grew the thick and velvety blue-grass. How the grass gets its name was not apparent at the season of my visit, but during fruiting the blue hue of its seed vessels is a conspicuous feature. Kentucky has not by any means a sole claim to the blue-grass. Few grasses are more widely distributed, but in the Kentucky district known especially as the blue-grass domain, it attains a singularly luxuriant growth. This domain covers a territory as large as the state of Massachusetts, and the limits are quite sharply defined. Its peculiar characteristics are due to the fact that the underlying rocks are limestone of a very ancient era, and their rapid decay keeps the soil constantly enriched. No amount of cultivation, even without fertilizing, seems to exhaust it, and for pasturage the region is unequalled either in America or in Europe.

The Blue-grass country is to a notable degree a land of rural homes. The people love the soil and prize the feeling of personal worth and importance that arises from the possession of a generous estate and a sense of lordship over all they survey. Practically every man of note in all Kentucky's history has been of rustic origin, and there never has been a time when the farmers have not been a controlling element of the population. Even now, more are engaged in agriculture than in all other pursuits combined. With a population of some two millions, the state's only good-

sized city is Louisville on the Ohio borders. Of the hundreds of towns and villages scattered through the interior scarcely any exceed five thousand inhabitants,



A Blue-grass Mansion

and most of them are wholly dependent for their meagre sustenance on the surrounding farm folk. The towns are themselves pastoral. The cultivated fields, the meadows, and the woodlands approach to their very borders, rustic vehicles abound on their streets, and the farmers are more in evidence than the townsmen.

The homes of the Blue-grass aristocracy resemble very closely the ancestral mansions of the English gentry. They are large and dignified and set far back

from the highway in parks dotted with ancient trees — mostly gnarled and sturdy oaks or walnuts. These mansions are not occasional. They are omnipresent, and everywhere you go there is evidence of a well-to-do existence. You find a constant repetition of wood and field, meadow and lawn, a lazy stream, an artificial pond, orchard and hedgerow, a tobacco barn, a race-track, browsing sheep, horses and cattle, and, half hidden by groves and shrubbery, the attractive and substantial houses.

A typical Kentucky mansion of the better class is Henry Clay's old home, "Ashland," on the outskirts of Lexington. I passed it as I walked out from the town. It is an ample structure of brick and was built by the statesman in 1809. From that time till he died in 1852 it was to him a beloved retreat from the cares and fatigues of his strenuous public life.

I followed "the pike." For miles it kept on up and down the rolling hills as straight as an arrow. Until recently it had been a toll road, and the antiquated little toll-gate houses still remained. I began to weary after a time of trudging that hard, unswerving road, and to wish some person driving in the direction I had taken would offer me a ride; but every one passed on unheeding till a colored man came jogging along in a market wagon drawn by a mule. He pulled up with a friendly invitation to occupy the seat with him, and I gladly accepted. He was on his way to a farm

he rented a mile or two beyond, and when he turned in at the farm-house gate, I went on alone again.

Presently I came to a cluster of three little stores. Another well-travelled road joined the pike here, and had the effect of making the spot a centre of commerce. Yet no village gathered about the stores and they looked rather forlorn and unnecessary. The proprietors apparently had unlimited leisure, and I stopped and had a chat with one of them. When I prepared to resume my tramping, he suggested that I ought to see an old church on a near hill. It had been built



An Old Toll-gate House on the Pike

over a century. "I been goin' to that chu'ch most eighty years," said the storekeeper, "and my mother was among the first to be baptized in it. The preacher

that baptized her was a man by the name of Ferris. He lived to be a very old man and I remember talkin' to him not long befo' he died, an' he said, 'I've baptized over seventeen hundred persons, and your mother was the best woman I ever baptized.' That was a big word for a preacher, and he told it to me settin' in his own porch."

I went up to look at the church. It was of stone, a plain little building of evident age with a diminutive yard about it protected by palings. In a large adjoining field was the cemetery covering perhaps an acre. The scattered headstones were leaning and broken — and no wonder, for they were not in any way shut off from the rest of the field, and the grazing horses and cows wandered among the graves at will. The dead of the community had been interred here since the earliest days of the region's settlement, and it was still used as a burial spot.

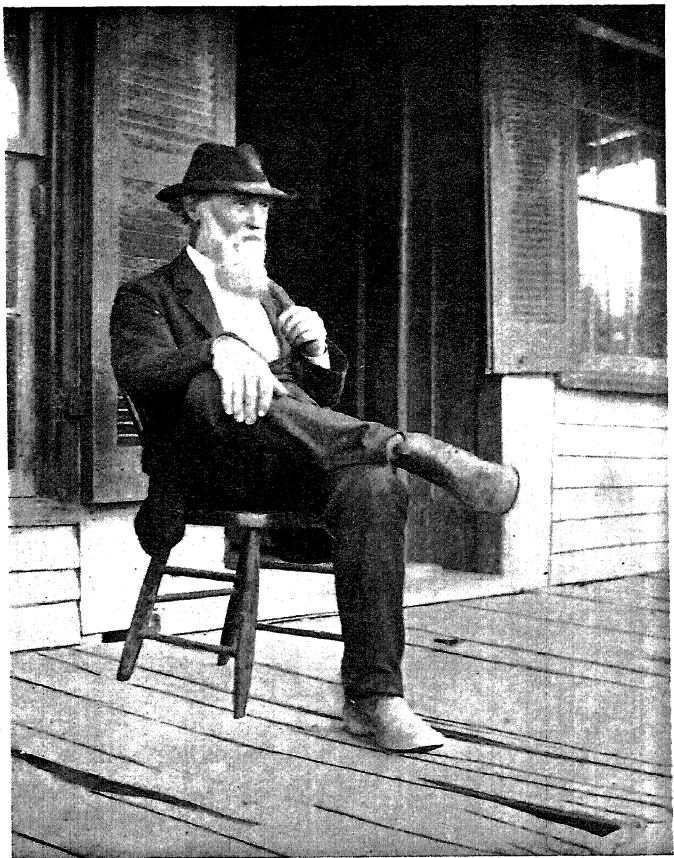
Evening was approaching when I returned to the highway, and I began to inquire for a lodging-place. I tried five houses, and on one plea or another was refused at all. There was no hotel within many miles. I even considered going back on the pike and seeking the home of the friendly negro who had given me a ride; but I tried once more. The woman who responded this time to my rap at the door said she had never turned any one away, but that I could get better accommodations elsewhere. I told her something of

my experiences, and she was indignant that a stranger should not everywhere find a prompt welcome. "Did you try that house?" she asked, pointing to a residence back in a grove on the opposite side of the road.

"Yes," I replied.

"Well, I wouldn't 'a' thought it of 'em," was her comment. "They're shoutin' Methodists—that's what they are, but hit don't seem like they live up to their religion. They got a nice place thar. Hit ain't much like what we got hyar. This house was pitched up with pitchforks;" saying which she ushered me in at the front door to the best room.

There the housewife left me while she resumed her work in some other part of the dwelling. I sat down in the doorway and looked out on the barren, treeless surroundings. A considerable portion of the yard was hard-trodden earth strewn with broken brick, chips, rusted tinware, and decaying vegetables. Near the rear of the house a dilapidated old man was cutting up brush for fire-wood, and talking to himself. The room to which I had been consigned was carpeted, and it had an ornate, marble-topped table with a bureau, wash-stand, and bed to match. Lace curtains were hung at the windows, and one's comfort was enhanced by several excellent chairs. But the walls failed to correspond to the elegance of the furniture. When the house was "pitched up with pitchforks," unplanned boards had been nailed on the outer side of the frame-



A COUNTRY STOREKEEPER

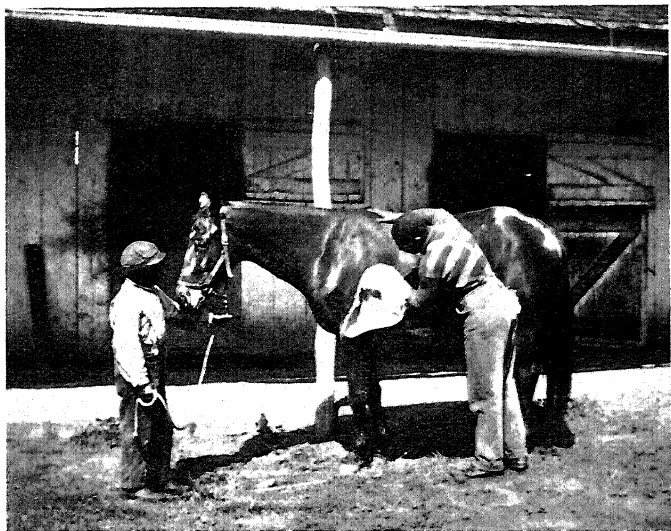
work, and then the structure had been clapboarded and work stopped. Nothing whatever had been done to the inner walls except that the unplanned boards were partially hidden by a pasting of daily newspapers and agricultural weeklies. This wall covering formed a curious motley of reading matter and advertisements of patent medicines, fertilizers, etc. It had rained the night before and water had leaked in copiously around the windows. To catch the drip several pitchers, bowls, and pails had been set on the floor next the wall and these had not yet been removed.

I lingered in the doorway until the sun had set and the dusk was becoming darkness. The meadow-larks that had been sighing in the fields as long as daylight lasted were silent; the red-headed woodpeckers I had seen in great numbers earlier had ceased their chirping and their clattering drum-beats on the dead limbs, and the air was filled with the guttural murmur of the toads. A big turkey gobbler fluttered up to the peak of a shed at the rear of the premises and established himself there for the night. At length my landlady came and lit the best-room lamp, and then led the way to the kitchen where we had supper. After we finished eating, the man of the house got out a great jack-knife, leaned back in his chair, and picked his teeth. That done he went with me to the best room and visited. He was a person of considerable intelligence, but mumbling in speech and given to frequent and

fearful yawns. He seemed to feel that it was his duty to entertain me, and though the talk was arduous, he performed it with conscientious thoroughness. From first to last the people of the house did all they could to make me comfortable and my stay agreeable, and when breakfast was concluded the next morning and I asked how much I owed, my landlady was reluctant to take any pay whatever. Still, I did not wish to impose on her generous hospitality, and I handed her a half dollar and a quarter. That seemed to her entirely too much and she returned the larger coin.

It was a beautiful morning. The sky was softly blue with scattered cloud puffs afloat on its cerulean depths, the sunshine was gently warm, and the grass fields were laden with dew. Kentucky is famous for its horses, and a large business is done in rearing them for the Northern market. No industry of the countryside has a more vivacious interest, and I spent much of the morning visiting one of the minor stock-farms. Several colored men and boys were kept busy all the time feeding, cleaning, exercising, and training the horses. The creatures were given the best of care, and each had a good-sized room to itself in the barns. The floor of the room was strewn with straw, the walls were whitewashed, and there was a window which must be promptly opened if the stall became too warm and as promptly shut when it became too cool. Everything was very neat and sweet, and the horses were

rather slicker than their attendants. One of the latter wore a white advertising cap labelled, in large letters, "COMPRESSED YEAST." I loitered a long time watch-



Rubbing down a Trotter

ing the compressed-yeast boy and another little fellow, who looked to be about ten years old, canter over the turf among the trees on the mettlesome ponies, giving them their morning exercise.

One day I walked into a place called Athens—a village with a look of antiquity that suggested close relationship with the Grecian city of like name. It was a battered, decayed little hamlet gathered about a

few shops and stores. Various village vehicles stood by the roadside of the narrow chief street, some wrecked past use, and others apparently left there for lack of shed room. Groups of loafers gathered wherever they could find convenient sitting-places in the shade, and the storekeepers established themselves in chairs tilted against the front of their emporiums and only went inside when a stray customer appeared.



A Village Scene

I made a purchase at one of the stores and then continued my walk, but I had not gone far when I was overtaken by a young man on horseback. He proved to be the man at whose store I had traded,

and the sole object of his ride was to have a talk with me. He had followed me at a gallop, but as he came abreast, he slowed down and called out, "How de do?" For several miles he kept in my company. He said he was not very busy. "This is the poorest country on God's earth for trade," he affirmed. "I'll tell you for why. There's too few people and too many stores — dag-goned if there ain't. Sometimes I think I'll sell out, lock, stock, and barrel [that is, he would sell everything as completely as if he sold his gun — lock, stock, and barrel]. But I cain't quite make up my mind to it.

"I s'pose you'd heard of *Athens* before you come thar to-day. Yes, I s'pose every one's heard of *Athens*, Kentucky. It ain't a bad place — dag-goned if it is. It's better'n any dag-goned city that ever was. Now, I cain't stay in a big place like Lexington more than half a day. Then I got to get out or die. The heat and the smells and the hard pavements drive me crazy, dag-goned if they don't. I think about all thar is in Lexington is noise. I'm dag-goned glad I don't have to work in such a place. I don't like it a little bit.

"What a dag-goned lot of these red-headed wood-peckers there are! You can always plant your corn when they come, or anything else. The winter's generally broke then, and you c'n calculate there won't be no more frost.

"That rain we had the other night putt the ground

in good fix to plough. The field over the fence yonder is hemp. We raise a heap of hemp hyar when the price ain't too dag-goned low. The next field is blue-grass. Two years ago that field was sowed to blue-grass and clover, and the blue-grass has done eat the clover out a'ready. See, it kivers the ground. It's the purest grass in the world, I reckon, and comes nearer to bein' corn, oats, and hay all in one than anything that grows out of the ground."

We passed a negro by the wayside, breaking stone for use on the road. "That's a good job for him," said my friend. "He's paid so much a yard, and he'll earn a dollar a day and not half work. He wouldn't be paid but seventy-five cents at regular wages. We got a very good class of niggers aroun' hyar, but they naturally will steal. Befo' the war the niggers was worked very hard and fed very poor, and after they'd got through a day their first thought was to steal something to eat. They ain't never got over that — dag-goned if they have. Did you ever have a nigger work for you? Well, he has about two ideas — to beat you out of all the time he can and then to get his money; and if you don't pay prompt, even if it ain't more'n five cents, he'll wear out a pair of shoes chasin' you to get it. But if he owes you, he'll wear out a pair of shoes walkin' aroun' you to keep out of your way — dag-goned if he won't."

Thus the equestrian enlightened me as we went

along, and I was a willing listener, though I grew rather weary of his dag-goning. Once he stopped his horse to accost a child in a home gateway. "Go get your hair brushed so you'll look like you was human," he commanded, and the frightened youngster hastened to shelter. "Did you ever see such a dag-goned-looking kid?" he inquired, addressing himself to me.

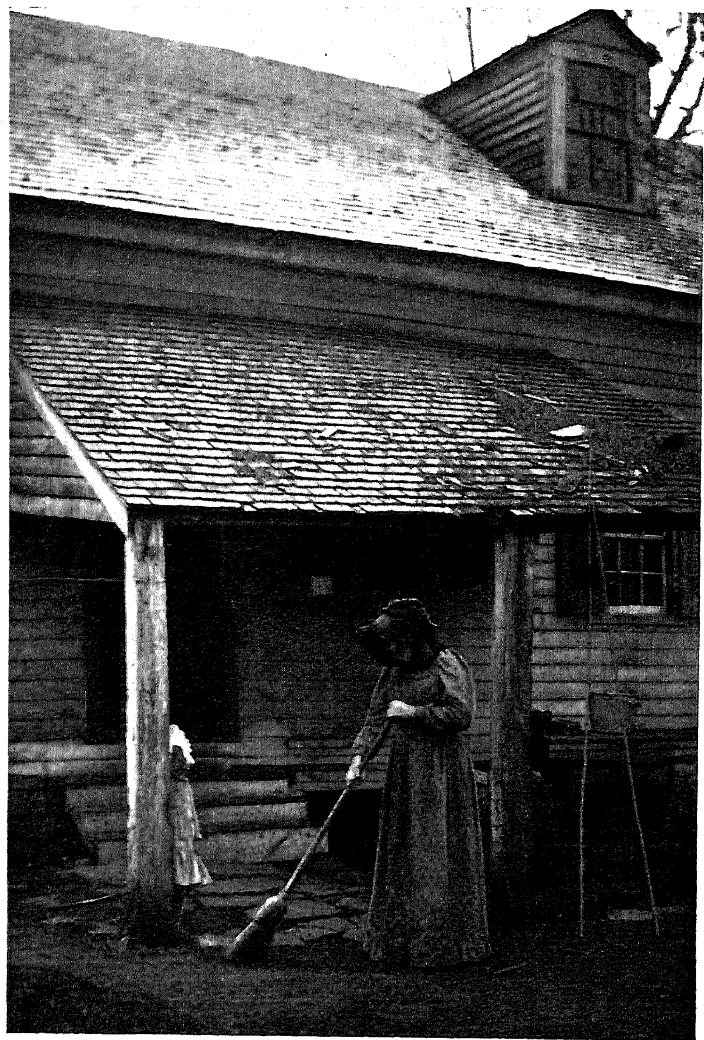
My companion finally turned back, but I did not go far alone before I was joined by a small boy who was hunting for his cows. They were in the habit of feeding by the roadside, and were as likely to have wandered in the direction I was going as any other, and the boy walked along with me for two or three miles. Then he concluded he must search elsewhere. Near where he left me, on a little hill, had been a rude fort in the latter part of the eighteenth century known as Bryan's Station, and here had been fought a famous battle with the Indians.

Most of the Indians with whom the Kentucky pioneers contended were from north of the Ohio, for Kentucky itself had very few savage dwellers. The last raid that the Indians made in force culminated early one August morning of 1782 in the attempt to capture Bryan's Station, which consisted of about forty cabins surrounded by a stout palisade. The assailants numbered six hundred. Only fifty men were available for the defence, and they were in no condition to offer an effective resistance. Their

palisades needed repairs and the fort was destitute of water; but they at once prepared for the combat, and two mounted messengers broke through the Indian lines to alarm the other stations and bring reinforcements. Then the women were told that the safety of the garrison demanded that they bring a supply of water from the spring at the foot of the hill outside the fort. The women bravely accepted the situation, went in a body to the spring, filled their pails, and had the good fortune to return unharmed. Shortly afterward the Indians charged on the fort, but the attack was repulsed and the Indians lost heavily.

Meanwhile the messengers had alarmed the Lexington garrison, and a considerable party, some mounted and some on foot, hastened to the relief of the beleaguered Station. The Indians laid in ambush for them where the narrow road was bordered on one side by high corn and on the other by a dense wood. The whites fell into the trap, but the horsemen spurred on, and their speed and the cloud of dust they raised carried them safely past the flying bullets of the excited savages. The footmen, who were creeping through the corn-field to the fort, started to go to the aid of the horsemen when they heard the Indians firing on them, and were scattered by the tenfold force of the enemy, and six of them were killed.

On the second night of the siege the leader of the Indians approached the fort in the sheltering darkness,



AT THE BACK DOOR

and from behind a stump hailed the garrison and demanded its surrender. One of the defenders called back that if the "Indian gang of murderers" remained twenty-four hours longer before the fort, their scalps would be found drying on the roofs of the white settlers' cabins.

The chief knew that the pioneers from far and near would soon be flocking to the aid of the garrison, and he concluded to withdraw his forces. Daylight disclosed the Indian camp deserted. Their fires were still burning brightly, and several pieces of meat were on the roasting-sticks, showing that the foe had just gone. Detachments of men from other stations now began to arrive, and among their leaders was the renowned Daniel Boone. With very little delay a party of one hundred and sixty started in pursuit of the Indians, and no sooner did they come up with the retreating raiders than they made a foolhardy and disastrous attack. Nearly half of the whites were killed, and the rest were dispersed and found their way to their homes by circuitous routes through the wilderness. Boone's son Israel was mortally wounded, and the father, after bearing the son beyond the field of struggle, watched beside him in the forest until he died.

Not far from the site of the old fort at Bryan's Station I found lodging in a farm-house. The dwelling was very different from the one in which I spent

my first night in the blue-grass country. This was a fine old mansion, low and spreading, with a line of humble structures behind it that had formerly been slave quarters. I recall with especial pleasure looking from the front porch, after my hard day's tramping, out on the grassy, generous yard set full of trees, — locusts, poplars, maples, pines, cedars, etc., — forty-two varieties of them I was told in that one yard. A squad of blackbirds clucked and squeaked up amidst the foliage, a cat-bird mewed, and a robin was carolling, and there were swallows coursing through the air in swift, twittering flight. As I sat on the porch, whiling away the mild spring evening with these sights and sounds around, I felt that few spots on earth had been endowed by nature with such home charms as the Blue-grass country of Kentucky.

VIII

ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO



An Onion Patch

I WAS in West Virginia at a village close beside the great river. The day was warm and hazy, and the distant hills faded in delicate tints of blue into the sky. Both the scene and the weather were conducive to loitering, and I spent all of one morning on the river bank. Nothing impressed me more than the long and steep descent from the

level of the surrounding country to the level of the water. I had never seen a stream bordered by alluvial banks of such extraordinary height. Here and there patches of bushes grew on the declivities, but for the

most part the surface was strewn with stones, or covered with deposits of mud and sand. A line of drift rubbish showed how high the last flood had been. Evidently the banks had been filled nearly to the brim, and the river must then have been a frightful torrent, immense in depth and breadth and sinister power. Now, low down in the bottom of the channel, and stained a reddish yellow with soil washings, it looked like an artificial drainage canal.



A Ferry Steamer

A stern-wheel ferry steamer plied across the river every few minutes to a village on the opposite side of the stream, and a little above the landing on the West Virginia side were two men in a rowboat setting fish-

lines. Residents on the river banks do a good deal of desultory fishing, and I constantly observed men and boys, both on shore and in boats, trying with baited hooks to entice the finny folk from the water. Once I saw a boy haul out a "mud cat" that weighed six or seven pounds—a veritable monster of the deep with its big, flat head and its "horns." All the fishermen and loafers who chanced to be near came to see the prize, for it was not every day a fish of this size was captured, and the hero of the exploit proudly exhibited his catch, and told over and over again just how he pulled it in. The only derogatory remark I heard was from a man who said he didn't think "slick" fish like mud cats and eels were very good eating. "I like scaly fish like perch a good sight better," he declared.

The most persistent of the river fishermen are the "shanty boat" dwellers. A shanty boat is a scow fitted up as a house-boat, and affording shelter for a family. Such families have no other homes and are a species of river gypsies. They catch fish both to eat and to sell, and they have a number of other make-shifts for earning a living; and whenever honest resources do not satisfy them, they fall back on stealing. They visit hen-houses, rob stores, and pick up a little of everything. In fact the shanty boats are considered to shelter "the worst thieves there are," and a great many of the residents alongshore live in "absolute

horror" of these river pirates. They avoid getting into trouble with the shanty-boat people, and hesitate to accuse them of crime even on the best of evidence, for fear the outlaws will retaliate and burn their accusers' buildings or wreak vengeance in some other form. It is never easy to fasten their ill-doing on them or to arrest them, because they can shift their habitations so readily and transfer themselves from one state to another by merely crossing the river. I was told that among themselves they lived practically outside the pale of the law, and in support of this assertion my informant said: "Three years ago a shanty boat was hitched to the shore close by where I live, and one night while it was there, I heard a woman's shrieks, and her cries kep' growin' fainter and fainter until they stopped. I haven't a doubt that woman was choked to death. All they had to do afterward was to tie a stone to the body and throw it in the river, and no one would be the wiser."

The villages and farm-houses in the immediate vicinity of the river had the aspect of keeping abreast with modern civilization, but no sooner did I leave this narrow valley strip than I was in a region so much more recently subdued and so much less in touch with the world outside, that I seemed transported fifty or seventy-five years into the past. Here were hills and crooked glens and rough woodland, and the people had the characteristics of mountaineers.



CORN-MEAL DAY

One of the excursions I made into the uplands was on a Saturday. The final day of the week is corn-meal day, and I met no end of men on their way to mill, some on horseback with a bag behind them, some on foot with the grist balanced on a shoulder. They were all sociably inclined and greeted me with, "Howdy," and occasionally a man stopped to learn my business, and among other things would ask, "Where do you hold forth when you are to home?" Once I came across a two-horse load of oak railway ties that had met disaster in a mud-hole. The driver was a boy. He had thrown off half the ties and extricated the wagon, and was now endeavoring to reload. The task looked to be beyond his strength, and I went to his assistance. When we finished he said, "Paw's not got his breaking up done yit, and he say to git back this mornin' so he could plough this afternoon. 'Pears like I couldn't 'a' done hit if yo' hadn't 'a' holped me."

Some of the valleys up which I wandered were very pretty, particularly when I got away from the outreach of the Ohio floods. Every year, with the departure of winter, the roily, swollen waters not only fill the main channel but set far back in all the tributary hollows. They leave a deep deposit of mud, and the mud of the latest overflow had not yet been hidden by summer verdure. It was still spring, and I heard the bob-whites announcing their presence in

the woods, and the gentle crooning of the turtle-doves, and a thousand other bird songs. Blossoms, too, were plentiful, the dark red papaw blooms being especially conspicuous on the roadside bushes.



Some Farm Buildings

The houses among the hills were small and poor. Often they were of logs. Round about each dwelling was likely to be a huddle of nondescript sheds and shacks for the shelter of the stock and crops, and not much care was shown as to appearances; yet now and then a house-yard had been securely fenced against the marauding domestic animals, and grass and fruit trees had been encouraged, so that the home was quite attractive. Very little paint was used on the buildings,

and most of that little must be credited to the advertising enterprise of rival merchants in neighboring towns. The handiwork of the sign painters was very rude, and it was often ungrammatical. A curious and startling result was obtained by one of these advertisements, through careless spacing between words and letters and a lack of punctuation. It covered all one side of a small barn, and was intended to advertise clothing, but an S belonging to the second word got astray, and the mammoth letters informed the public that

ALL MEN SWEAR
AT SAM GORDONS.

A common adjunct of the homes was a toy house on a pole for the box martins to live in. These birds are encouraged, not simply for the pleasure of the people who provide the shelters, but because the martins are sworn enemies of the hawks, and give effective police protection to the chickens. Water was, of course, plentiful in the hills, though the dwellings were seldom amply and conveniently supplied with it. Some had cisterns that stored the roof water, but this supply gave out in dry spells, and it was apt to be discolored and to taste of the wood over which it had flowed. Some families depended on springs, frequently at quite a distance, and brought the water a pailful at a time. I saw one girl lugging along such a burden who

had to go for it a quarter of a mile, climb a rocky hill, and crawl under a barbed-wire fence.



Going Home from the Spring

The half-wild glens I explored had an attraction distinctly their own, but it was the Ohio and its nearest borderlands that interested me most. One sultry afternoon, while following the highway across a meadow

level near the river, I was overtaken by a shower. The valley had been full of fog early, and all the morning a light mist permeated the air and dulled the sunshine. But by noon this mist had burned off, and the day was very hot until mid-afternoon, when gloomy clouds began to unfold in the west. They drifted upward and blotted out the sun, and spread a leaden twilight over the landscape. The lightning flickered along the horizon, and I heard the distant rumble of thunder. Presently the first big drops of rain were pelting down, and I ran on and escaped the heaviest of the downpour by seeking refuge in a little store at Jones's Landing. For half an hour the rain drenched the earth, and the cloudland artillery crashed, and the lightning rended the skies with savage lines of fire.

The store was a gray, unpainted, wooden structure one story high. It had a rude porch across the front, where the local citizens liked to linger to do their visiting and thinking. Commodities of all sorts were crowded inside — groceries, dry-goods, men's clothing, hardware, drugs, and I know not what. There was no other public building at the Landing, and only two dwellings were at all near. Indeed, Jones's Landing was simply a very minor steamer and ferry landing. Certain of the lesser steamers stopped at such times as there was occasion, and took on or let off passengers by a long gang-plank shoved out from the bow to the wharfless shore. A rough road slanted down the bank,

and where it began to descend was a bell suspended on a pole. When you wanted to cross the river, you rang the bell as a signal to the ferryman, who lived on the opposite shore. He took foot-passengers over in a skiff, and he conveyed teams on a scow, which he towed with his rowboat.

In the vicinity of the Landing was a stretch of rich meadow laid off in large fields of grass, grain, and corn, and the houses here were generally those of the descendants of the early settlers. They were of ample size, and pleasantly surrounded with old orchards and thrifty gardens. It was in one of these houses I found lodging after the shower. A fleshy, elderly woman had come to the door in response to my knock, and when she learned what I wanted, she regarded me sharply through her spectacles and said, "You ain't that man what was around here a while ago, be you?"

I assured her I had never been at Jones's Landing before.

"Well, I rather think he was more red-complected than you be," she continued. "He wanted something to eat. It was a Tuesday, and he said he hadn't eaten anything since Sunday but two raw potatoes; and it's likely he stole those. I asked him if he was willing to work for his victuals, and he said he was. So I told him he could cut up some wood and then I'd feed him. I got him the axe, and he cut one stick off, and then he raised up and rubbed his stomach. After that he

gave a few more blows, and raised up and rubbed his stomach some more; and I said to my daughter: 'That man's a-suffering. Get him a lunch;' and we laid the lunch out on a block, and he never cut any more wood. He picked up the lunch, and walked off."

At the conclusion of this narrative about the red-complected fraud who got his lunch so easily, I was made welcome. Pretty soon we had supper, and when we finished and the dishes were done, my landlady seated herself by an open window in the sitting room, puffing her pipe and occasionally spitting out into the yard. "I smoke after every meal," she informed me, "and forty other times in the day when I get worried; and I can remember the time when nearly all the women in the country smoked."

While she spoke, a great blundering beetle flew in and I caught it. "This must be a June bug," I suggested.

"Oh, Lor' no!" was the response. "June bugs are green. M-m-m—h-m-m! I know them. The children ketches 'em and ties strings to their legs to hear 'em sizz every time they give 'em a pull. What time is it by your watch?"

"Half-past six," I replied.

"I thought that was about it. You see it's after seven by our clock. I always keep our time fast. That's the only way to get things done. If you go on the gallop, it seems to hurry up everybody."

I made some remark about the clouds looking as if the weather was still doubtful, and she said: "I don't believe I've seen it rain as it did this afternoon since 1884. It was a terrible bad storm while it lasted. I was talkin' before supper with one of the neighbors who'd just come home on the train from down the river, and he said the lightning knocked a house all to pieces in Portsmouth and killed a man in Ironton; but he didn't hear of its doin' any particular damage in other places except for scaring the people."

"What about the storm in 1884?" I inquired.

"That was when we had the big flood. There hadn't been such a flood since the white people took possession of this valley. It was the last part of February, and for several days the rain fell in torrents. The water come in on our floors on a Saturday night at one o'clock. We'd all gone to bed early. I got up once and looked out, but it was dark and I thought the water wa'n't any nearer the house than it was in the early evening. By and by seem like something told me to get up again; and this time the moon came from behind a cloud and I could see the water had got in the yard; and I cried out, 'Oh, mercy, get up quick, Paw!' and he was out of bed in no time and he ran downstairs and rang the bell that we have hung on the porch to call the men to their meals. That woke everybody in the house and brought some men from the neighbors, and we got the things out of the cellar,

and then we took up our carpets. We had a big extension table in this room, and we piled the chairs and the carpets and a trunk full of things on it. We thought the water'd never get up to 'em, but it kep' risin' till Wednesday, and then it was over the mantle-



A Riverside Team

piece. The river was full of drift of every description — bridges and houses and fences, hay-stacks and straw-stacks — and it was just awful. Our barn is a little higher than the house; but the water come in there, too, and Monday we waded our horses and cows away to dry

land farther back. It was the middle of June before our cellar dried out, and our doors was all swelled so they wouldn't shut for months. With all the other damage, the steamers did a lot of hurt. They'd come along close to shore to keep out of the current, and the big waves from 'em would rock the flooded houses and do 'em more harm than the water had. That made the people mad, and some would shoot into the steamers to warn 'em off. It reminded me of war times."

"Why," said I, "was there fighting here in the war?"

"No, but there was raiding. We had a store-boat on the river then, and it was full of goods, and we used to peddle from it. We thought the goods was safer afloat than on shore, and when we'd hear of a squad of Rebel soldiers anywhere near, we'd get off across the river in the store-boat and live in it for a while. One time we swam our horses across the river to save 'em from raiders. Another time my little girl was standin' at the window and she call to me, 'Maw, the whole place is covered with soldiers!' and I looked out and see thirteen Rebel bushwhackers on their horses right in our yard. They'd jumped the fences and there they were. I ran out the back door down to the house-boat, but they followed me and stopped me on the shore, and I had to stand there with a gun levelled at me while they robbed our store. They carried off as much

as they could get on their horses, — almost a thousand dollars' worth, — and what they couldn't take they strewed around and stamped on. We had a big Union flag, and they fastened one end of that around the neck of the leader's horse and rode away with it trailing in the mud. No, 'tain't funny to live where there's war goin' on."

My landlady was over eighty years old and her memory carried her back to very primitive times. Her father was one of the earliest settlers of the region. "He and his two brothers and three sisters and their paw and maw come from Providence, Rhode Island," said she, "and several other families with 'em. They travelled to Pittsburg in wagons, and then they got a flatboat and floated down on that with their animals and goods to where Marietta is now, and my Uncle Oliver helped cut the first tree that was cut there. They stayed at Marietta till the Indians were driven out, and then they come down here. That was in 1808. They built a log cabin; but a few years later when they got better fixed, they put up a two-story, hewed-log house. There was only scattered families here then. Each one would make a little opening on the river bank and start a farm. It was all wilderness and the valley was overgrown with heavy forest. Many a fine tree five and six feet through has been cut on this place since *I* can remember. Oh, my goodness! I guess there never was any finer timber. Some people

just cut it and rolled it up and burned it to get it out of their way so they'd have the land clear for raising crops. Others saved anything that would split, and chopped it into cord wood and sold it to the steamers.

"They had to depend pretty much on themselves then for what they had. Father learned to tan buckskin, and he learned to make shoes and bedsteads and chairs. Every farmer kept sheep, and there was spinning-wheels and a loom in every house till long after the time I was married. In the fall, father was in the habit of building a boat and loading it with potatoes and apples and other produce and taking his load down the river to sell. Sometimes he'd go as far as New Orleans. He'd dispose of his produce and then of his boat, and after that he'd buy sugar and coffee and whatever we needed and come back on a steamer.

"The country was full of wild game then. I've seen a deer swim the 'Hio River myself, and I've seen wild pigeons light on one of our big oak trees so thick they'd break the limbs. There was ten gangs of wild geese then to one we have now. Even if a man was only goin' to his next neighbor's, he'd take his gun and shot-pouch along, and he was more'n likely to bring back some game. You could always have deer meat or b'ar meat if you wanted to take the trouble to go out and shoot it. Once when father was away a b'ar come and burst open the kitchen door in the night,



A SCHOOLGIRL AT HOME

and the dogs got after the b'ar and chased it through the house and out again. There was panthers and wolves, too, and we had to watch to see that our cattle and hogs wa'n't killed and carried off.

"About the time my father come of age he fought in the Indian wars. He was at Sandusky when Tecumseh was killed. Yes, he saw Tecumseh shot, and he always said the histories didn't tell the truth about how he died. Tecumseh was shot by a young boy, and father was only a few feet from that boy when he fired his gun. The soldiers got hold of Tecumseh's body, and they took his hide off and used it for razor strops. But they never made any great talk about doing that, because it was a punishable offence.

"I reckon there's been a big Indian battle some time right on our old farm. I've picked up many an arrowhead and tomahawk and flints when I been a-trottin' after my paw as he was ploughin' or hoein' in the fields.

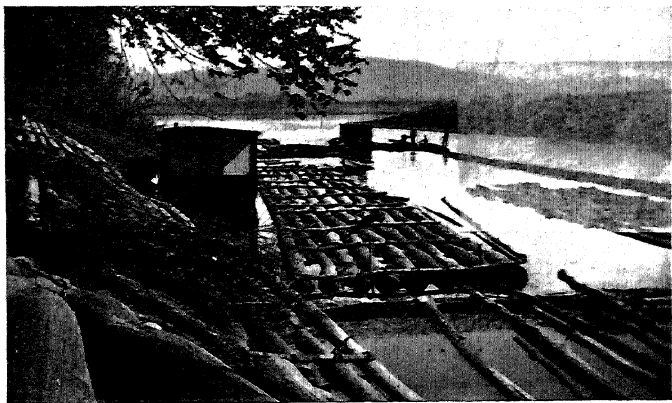
"It was in 1814, after he come back from fightin' Tecumseh, that he married. My mother's name was May Fuller. She lived at the next farm down the river. He got to have a liking for her, and he asked her would she marry him. She was only fourteen, and she says: 'I'm too young. You'll have to ask my pappy;' and her pappy, when father had a talk with him, said the same about her being too young, but he was willing to have him call on her. Things

might have been all right if it hadn't been that May had a stepmother, who said May shouldn't have anything to do with father, and she'd whip her if she even spoke to him. But May did speak to him, and her stepmother found out about it, and said she'd whip her the next morning. Mother never'd been whipped, and she lay awake all night, and very early, when the first birds began to twitter, she threwed her shoes out the window and crept downstairs and stole away into the woods. She'd rather the b'ars would eat her up than be whipped. Her folks was a-hunting for her all day and couldn't find her, though she was in among some grapevines near enough to the road so she saw her father go along looking for her, and her little brother with him crying. Her father come to our house, and grandpaw try to get him to agree not to punish May if she come back, but he said, 'I shan't say what I will do to her, now, when I get my hands on her.'

"He thought we were a-hiding of her, but we didn't know nothing where she was till she come around to the house that night after dark. For quite a while she was kept at father's house nights and hid in the fields daytimes. Her pappy had two men keep a watch on the house, but they was more in sympathy with her than him, and they never could see anything suspicious. Father said he thought he and mother better get married and done with it, and mother said

she was willing to leave the deciding with her older brother Stephen. 'Whatever Stephen says, I'll do,' she said. So they had Stephen come and told him how things were, and he put his hand in his pocket and took out a handful of change and gave to her, and said, 'Here, May, go ahead!'

"Then she and father got in a canoe and went down to Portsmouth, sixty miles. It was required them times to have their marriage intentions advertised from the pulpit by a minister of the gospel for ten days. But after that they was married, and then they paddled home. Grandpaw Fuller never could forgive that runaway wedding for a long time, but he did finally, and he got to think more of father than any son-in-law he had."



Rafts on a Tributary

IX

A VIRGINIA WONDER



The Natural Bridge

IT was evening at the little railway station nearest the Natural Bridge. I had just arrived, and I wanted to find a lodging-place. "Thar's a big hotel three mile from hyar up at the Bridge," said a man to whom I appealed; "but if you don't want to go so ffar, thar's a widow woman takes boarders hyar in the village and I reckon she'd take you. She lives in that thar little brown house up

the road whar you see that thar man out in front with a horse and buggy."

I turned my footsteps thither. The man with the horse and buggy was trying to make a sale of his outfit to the widow. "You c'n ride spang up to a railroad engine," said he, "with this hyar horse and shake hands with the engineer. He don't mind no more about an engine than he does about a gate-post," and the man went on to list the horse's other virtues, — apparently it had all there were and no faults, — "and I'll sell you the whole rig, horse, harness, buggy, blanket, and whip, for one hundred and fifteen dollars."

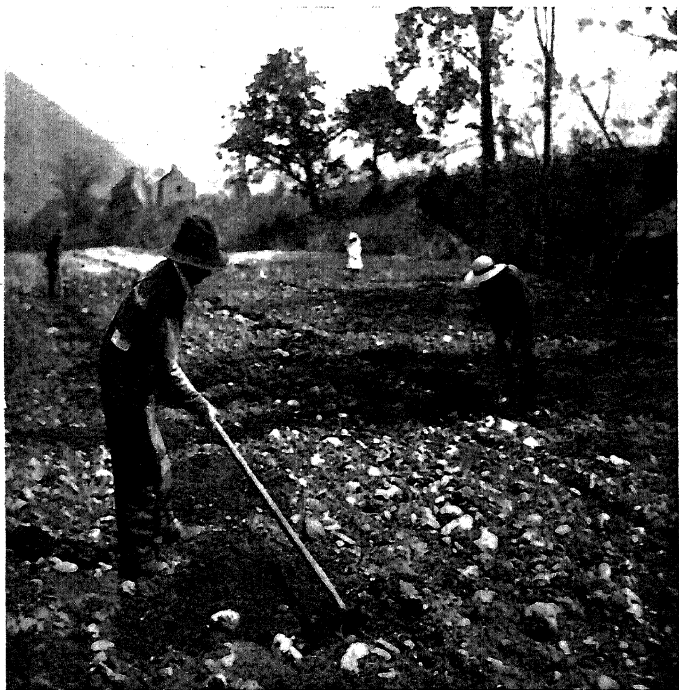
If he told the truth in regard to the horse, the offer was equal to any twenty-nine cent bargain ever exploited in a department store, but the widow would not decide until she had consulted her relatives. When the man left I had no trouble in arranging for lodging, and while the evening light waned I sat on the house porch in company with the widow's son, a near-sighted little boy who was assiduously reading Rollins's "Ancient History." Reading, either for pleasure or recreation, is not indulged in nearly so generally in the South as in the North, and this boy conning that dry old history was something unique.

Scarcely a stone's throw distant was the river James, here only a few rods broad; and not many miles distant, along the eastern borders of the valley, rose the Blue Ridge Mountains, lofty and serene. The great azure ranges rolled up into the eastern sky quite as

enticingly the next morning, and the valley openings in among them seemed to offer such easy access to a closer acquaintance with the wooded heights that I could not resist the temptation to at once pay them a visit. I crossed the river and the intervening lowlands and entered a wide, half-timbered glen. There were occasional farm-houses, and there were occasional cultivated fields, though these fields were usually so strewn with stones you had to keep a sharp lookout to discern the soil. The farmers were scratching around with ploughs, harrows, and hoes, getting their corn into the ground, and I noted one field where some boys were planting an acre of watermelons.

It was an ideal spring day. The sky was delicately blue, with here and there a fluffy cloud adrift on it; a soft breeze kept the new foliage in a constant ripple; the air was full of warmth and was vibrant with the twitter of birds and the buzzing of flies and bees. Flowers twinkled amid the greenery, and sometimes an azalea bush made a pink mass of perfume, while everywhere were abounding dogwood blossoms looking like big snowflakes that had just floated down into the woodland.

A stream coursed through the glen, and at short intervals where the road encountered it were rocky fords with an accompanying log spanning the current for the convenience of pedestrians. The creek had no sawmills or other manufacturing establishments on



Planting Watermelons

it, and its waters were uncommonly clear. The farther I went the more charmingly pelucid it became, and its music as it rustled along over the stones was a genuine forest melody. I liked to pause and watch it, and I was allured to drink from its cool rock pools every time I crossed it. But perhaps the finest water I had on the trip was from a little spring near the "Anderson State House."

I did not understand, when this mansion was first mentioned, why there should be a state-house in so secluded and sparsely settled a mountain valley. However, I finally made out that it was simply the old family residence on the Anderson *estate*. The house was large and comfortable looking. It was in a little grove with numerous log outbuildings in the rear, and, at some remove a group of rude log dwellings much decayed and battered, that before the war had been slave quarters. In a ravine in front of the mansion was an emerald-bordered rivulet. A foot-path led thither to a small log spring-house built directly over the brook; and if you looked through the crevices between the logs, you saw earthen crocks and jars set in the running stream. I could not help fancying that the farm milk, cream, and butter contained in these receptacles must be superlatively sweet and appetizing; for was not nature herself taking care of them? Here, too, was kept the upright, wooden churn, and on a few boards laid down on the stones before the door the churning and butter-making were done. Spring-houses are common in the South and give the country one of its most idyllic touches.

I drank from a dipping-place hollowed out in the stream close beside the tiny log structure, and thus frightened half a dozen timid minnows that made their home in the pool. Just as I was rising from the refreshing draught a barefooted little girl came tripping

down the path. She gave a startled glance at me from the depths of her sunbonnet and ran back. Then her



A Spring-house

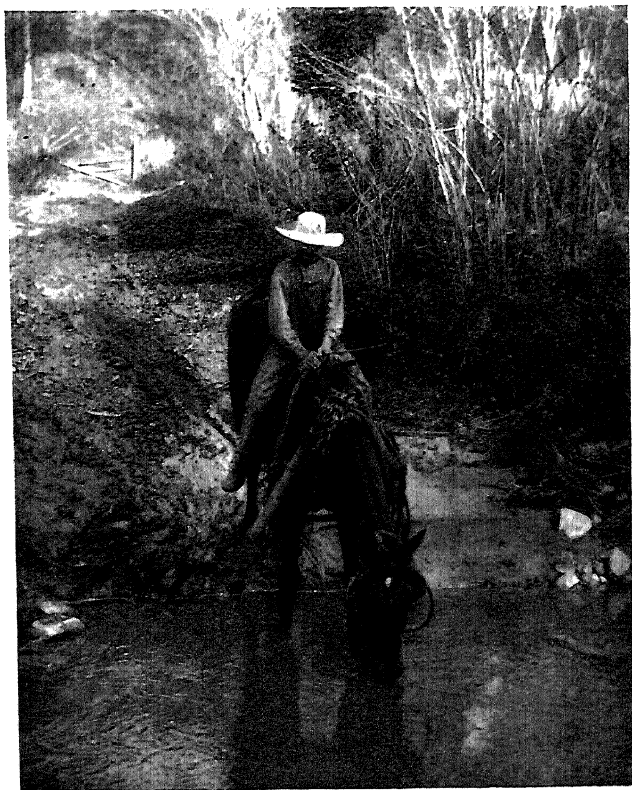
father appeared and urged me to accompany him to the home porch, but I preferred to sit and visit with him in the shadow of the spring-house.

"It was on my farm," said he, "that the first settler of the valley built his cabin. His name was Arnold. That was way back in Indian times and he made his livin' by hunting. One time when he was gone a few days to sell his hides another feller come up the valley. He had stoled him a girl, and wanted to get her away from where he'd be followed; and he found Arnold's cabin and went in and made himself to home. By and by Arnold come back bringin' a runlet of whiskey on his shoulder, and he and the fellow that was at his cabin made friends, and the end of it was that Arnold give him the kag of whiskey for the girl. Arnold and this wife he bought with his whiskey lived in the valley the rest of their days, and there's many of their descendants in the country yet.

"I'm glad I met up with you-all," remarked my host, cordially, when I rose to go, and he expressed regret that I could not stay longer.

Like all Southern people, he had infinite leisure. The opinion is inherited from slavery times that leisure is a natural right of the white man and that work belongs to the "niggers." The situation was once explained to me thus: "No, we don't hustle after the dollar the way you Yankees do. The Southern man with enough money in his pocket to live in a manner befitting his station this month, and with fair prospects of more for next month, will not worry or exert himself because of possible emergencies in the dim future."

I kept on and on until the zigzagging rail fences that had bordered the road ceased, and I was ascending a mountain in almost uninterrupted woodland. Here was still an occasional little house with a fenced-in garden patch and an adjoining field or two. The



A Farmer's Boy

cows roamed free and browsed on the low forest leafage. Now and then I would see one of them picking about in the underbrush, and I constantly heard the dull tink, tink, of the bells fastened to their necks.

Noon came and the sun looked down into the forest depths and made the air along the ribbon of roadway palpitate with heat. It was doubly warm climbing, and after a time I concluded to turn back. I was getting hungry, and when I presently approached a small frame house and noted the chimney smoking suggestively, I clambered over the fence and rapped at the door. Around a table, inside, were a man and woman and a dozen children, more or less, eating dinner. Several of the lesser youngsters hastened to poke their heads out and have a look at me. They were so begrimed and ragged, they seemed more heathen than civilized; but the mother hustled them into a back room and set a chair out on the porch for me, and when the children reappeared their faces shone fresh from a scrubbing.

The man of the house kept me company while the ham, hot biscuit, and coffee were being prepared. There were mountains near at hand which we could see over the tops of the trees surrounding the little clearing. "That thar," said the farmer, pointing to one of the heights, "is Panther Knob on the Wildcat Mountain; and do you see that bare, stony place on it? They call that 'The Devil's Marble Yard.'"



A Load of Logs

Not far from where we sat was a row of beehives on the sunny side of a log shed. "Is this a good place for honey-making, with the woods all around?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes, sir," replied my companion, "thar's always a crop of some kind of flowers hyar until frost comes; and we have a heavy honey dew hyar the first part of the summer like, that on some trees is just the natural drops of honey. The bees get all they can carry of that dew till it dries off about eleven o'clock."

The children had gathered about to listen, but now the smallest one raised the cry of "Scorpion!" He had found a gray lizard with a blue tail crawling up the house weather-boards, and he and the others all grabbed sticks and would have killed it had I not taken its part. The older members of the family, as well as the younger, called it a scorpion and considered it "a powerful pizenous varmint."

Down the road a short distance, in a brushy field, was a log schoolhouse about sixteen feet square. There were thirty-four children in the district of school age, and the building must have been badly crowded when school was in session, but it was in fairly good condition, and harmonized very well with the woodland scenery and the rugged blue mountains that loomed on every side. Some of the scholars continued in school until they were twenty-one, and they were allowed to go even after that age on payment of a dollar a month. This charge, however, was practically prohibitive. I asked the man at the house where I had stopped if the older pupils did not make trouble for the teachers.

"No, sir," was his response, "it's only the little fellers that are mean and devilish. When a boy gets to be fifteen or over, he's ashamed to misbehave thataway."

I ate dinner in the cook-room—a diminutive, barren apartment with just about space enough to ac-



A SUNNY AFTERNOON

commode the stove and a small table. The table was very shaky in the legs, and wobbled alarmingly every time I attempted to cut my meat, and it no doubt performed a veritable St. Vitus's dance when the whole family were eating around it. The day was warm and the atmosphere in the little cook-room fairly sizzled. The stove was right at my elbow, and I was glad to escape to the outer air as soon as possible.

I arrived at my starting-place in the early evening, and the following morning I was off for the Natural Bridge. The route was not unlike that I had traversed up Arnold's Valley—sometimes bordered by farm fields, but for the most part through lonely woodland. Halfway there I overtook two bright little colored girls, and for a time walked along in their company. One of them carried a black hand-bag, and when we got acquainted, she confided that she was collecting money for the church. She took out a dirty card with figures around the edge—rows of ones, fives, and tens. Whenever a contribution was secured, a figure corresponding to the amount was crossed off with a lead pencil. I noticed that the pencil had been used most on the one-cent rows.

We had not gone far when the girls pointed out an elderly negro in a field on the edge of the woods and said he was their grandfather. He was splitting out roofing, and I went over to see how the work was done. He had cut down an oak tree that he thought



Splitting out Shingles from an Oak

would be straight-grained, sawed it into three-foot lengths, and was now riving these blocks into thin boards which he later reduced to a more even thickness on a rude shaving-horse. I sat down and we had

a talk. He told me he had a little farm of thirty or forty acres, and I asked if he knew of other colored people who owned their places. He paused in his work, shut one eye, and counted twenty-two persons



A Home Gateway

within a mile who had acquired such farms. "They didn't all get 'em fo' de right price, though," said he. "Hit seem like ev'y one want to gouge yo' dese days. But I doan' let 'em gouge me. I'm a little too ole in de haid. I done learnt a whole parcel."

His children were all grown up. "I raised 'em on honest bread," he explained, "an' dar ain' never one of 'em given me no trouble. Dey make me proud. I ain' a shoutin' man,—an' I'm a Baptis', too,—but dey make me so proud I could jus' shout way over de highest hill you c'n see. De children are scattered now, an' I got one daughter in New York, an' hit's so long since I have hearn from her I reckon she mought be daid."

Later, when I resumed the road, I fell in with another local resident, this time a white man who had been an officer in the Confederate army. I repeated what the colored man had said about the prevalence of "gouging."

"Well," he commented, "there's some queer things in the South. You take the people in the mountains over in West Virginia and Kentucky—they're good enough until yo' do something they don't like and then they're terrible, and yo' got to look out or you'll get shot. The Virginians are different, and I always thought befo' the war they couldn't be equalled anywhere; but they been deiterating. They ain't what they used to be. A man would despise to do any-



COMPANIONS

thing mean or underhand then. They were honorable and trustworthy and generous to a fault; but now, as the nigger was tellin' you, you got to look out for 'em or they'll gouge you."

The rude, country road I was following at length conducted me to a group of hotels and dwellings, and there I turned aside from the highway and descended a steep path shadowed by fine trees into a deep valley. Here was a brawling stream, and just around a turn loomed the bridge close at hand, two hundred and fifteen feet high, ninety in span, and one hundred broad. Its immensity quite took my breath away. Nothing one has read or imagined can wholly prepare the visitor for this herculean span of rock across that abysmal chasm. Viewed from below it seems lifted into the very sky. Trees and bushes grow on its top as on a mountain summit, and the swallows dart under it so far above the spectator as to make the arch appear like another firmament. The grace and regularity of the bridge suggest human handiwork, but doubtless in ages past the stream hollowed out a cavern in the valley, the roof of which all fell in long, long ago save for this sturdy fragment.

Another interesting impression of the bridge is obtained by climbing out of the glen and following the country road across the arch. The road is fenced and is bordered by trees and bushes, and without investigation you would never suspect but that you

were on solid earth. Indeed, it is related that an army passed along this road during the Civil War, and not a man of the thousands in the command realized at the time that he was crossing the famous Natural Bridge.

The bridge began to acquire notoriety in colonial days, and George Washington visited it on one of his youthful surveying trips. We are told that he is the only person ever known to throw a stone from the bottom of the bridge to the top. Where the stream flows under the arch, he carved his name on the precipitous rock wall twenty-five feet from the base and there you can see it even now. Apparently he took considerable pains to make his inscription so high up that no one would place a name above it. But, if so, he labored in vain, for many a man since has made the hazardous scramble and put himself on record above Washington's twenty-five-foot limit. The most remarkable exploit in this line was that of a young man who, early in the last century, after out-rivalling all his predecessors in the height to which he attained, found he was placed in such a situation that it was impossible to descend.

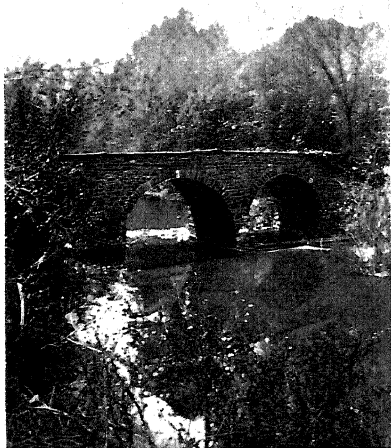
To quote from an account written at the time: "There was no house near whence his companions could get assistance. He could not long remain in that condition, and his friends looked upon him as already dead, expecting every moment to see him

precipitated upon the rocks below and dashed to pieces.

“Not so with himself. He determined to ascend. Accordingly he plied his knife, cutting places for his hands and feet in the soft limestone and gradually ascended with great labor. His companions stood at the top of the rock exhorting and encouraging him. He cut his way not far from two hundred and fifty feet from the water, in a course almost perpendicular; and in a little less than two hours his anxious companions reached him a pole from the top and drew him up. They received him with shouts of joy; but he himself immediately fainted, and it was some time before he could be recovered.”

X

THE BATTLE-FIELD OF BULL RUN



Stone Bridge over Bull Run

“H AVE a ride?”

I had started on a six-mile walk from Manassas, or Manassah, as it is called locally, to the historic battle-field, and a carriage driven by a young man had overtaken me. The carriage stopped and I climbed in. At my companion's feet in the bottom of the vehicle was a square black valise, and he informed me that he was making a raid on

the South with a Yankee patent medicine. I could not help thinking that the patent medicine would probably prove more deadly than the Northern bullets had in the late war.

The country round about dipped and rose in slight ravines and low hills, with open fields and patches of woodland following each other interminably. Houses were few and far between. Most of them were set well back from the highway, at the end of a lane to which you gained entrance from the main road by a big wooden gate. The lane was sometimes bordered by trees, but was seldom fenced. It led more or less directly through a great field that was perhaps under cultivation, yet oftenest was a pasture for horses and cattle. Barns were small and unsubstantial, and frequently a few makeshift hovels sufficed instead. Many farmers kept their cows and horses in long, rude sheds, eight or ten feet high, with sides of rails and poles, and the top piled over with straw. There was no pretence that the roof was rain-proof, and the structures looked as if they had been contrived by some primitive race of savages.

The soil was a red clay, and the roads were the color of brick. They ran very straight for the most part; but they were rutted and rough, and I got well shaken while I was being taken by the patent medicine man, and of course he fared the same. "I feel like a kernel of corn in a popper," said he, "and I'm afraid these jolts will drive my spinal column up through my cranium."

He stopped his horse once, when we met a native, and made some derogatory remark about the road, but

the native assured us that it was very good compared with its winter condition. "There's mud then, shore," was his comment, "and it sticks closer than a brother; and it's so deep your horse can't hardly get along even without a load. I reckon the mud always has a bottom, but in winter it seem like there was spots where the bottom was too far down to find."

Of all the roads that I became acquainted with in this region, the worst was the Warrenton Pike right on the battle-field. At some remote period a vast amount of stone had been dumped on it, and this stone had become more or less mixed with the red clay. The road may have been fairly good in that long-gone summer when the Federal troopers marched out on it from Washington; but, if so, I should judge that during the battle the cannon-balls and bursting shells had shot it all to pieces and that it had never been repaired since — yet it is an important highway. I saw a huckster's team toiling over it going to the capital, thirty miles distant. The wagon was a big covered cart loaded with crates of live fowls, boxes of eggs, and other produce. It was drawn by four horses and came twenty miles or more from Rappahannock County, a county without railroads. How it did sway and jar! I pitied the chickens, and fancied the eggs must become omelets by the time they reached the journey's end.

I think many casual students of history have the impression that the battle-field took its name from the

disorderly haste with which the Northern soldiers departed after the fight, but in reality the name comes



A Huckster's Team on the Way to Washington

from that of a mild, muddy little river near which the engagement was fought. At the beginning of the conflict the Confederate lines extended along the western branch of Bull Run for seven miles. The left flank was in the vicinity of a stone bridge on the Warrenton Pike, and there, soon after sunrise, on a scorching July day of 1861, the battle opened. No very vigorous attempt was made, however, to force a passage of the stream at this point, and the main body of Federals made a long detour and crossed unopposed. When these troops arrived on the field the struggle began in

earnest and the Confederates were forced back for about a mile across a shallow valley. But on the far side of the valley they formed along the crest of a slope, and the Union troops assailed them in vain. "Look at Jackson's brigade!" said the Southern General Bee in the crisis of the battle, pointing to the troops that were bearing the brunt of the attacks. "It stands there like a stone wall;" and thus originated the name which later became inseparable from the brigade's famous commander.

Again and again the Federal regiments charged up the exposed slope, but a frontal attack on that ground was doomed. The assailants were cut to pieces every time, and when, about the middle of the afternoon, the Confederates were reënforced and charged in their turn, the Union forces gave way. They retreated grudgingly, contesting the ground until they were beyond Bull Run. Two miles farther on was another little river—Cub Run by name—and on the turnpike between the two streams were many army wagons. Here, too, were numerous carriages that had brought out the gentry of Washington to see the Northern soldiers "thrash the Rebs." Near Cub Run, several steep-sided ridges ran athwart the turnpike, and the road was so extremely rough it might well make trouble even if there was no excitement. As soon as the drivers and onlookers along the turnpike became aware that the Federals were failing to give the Rebs their thrashing, the wagons

and carriages turned about in all haste to seek safety, and things grew chaotic. Then a Confederate battery began dropping shells into the huddle of teams and the wildest confusion ensued. Every man looked out for himself, wagons were overturned, horses cut loose, the road was blocked, and the retreat of the army became a panic-stricken rout.

One man I met at Bull Run had been a Union soldier. In explanation of this first great Northern defeat he had a theory which I thought very interesting. "At the time the war broke out," said he,



The Spot where Stonewall Jackson was Wounded

"guns were in much commoner use in the South than in the North, and familiarity with weapons has a

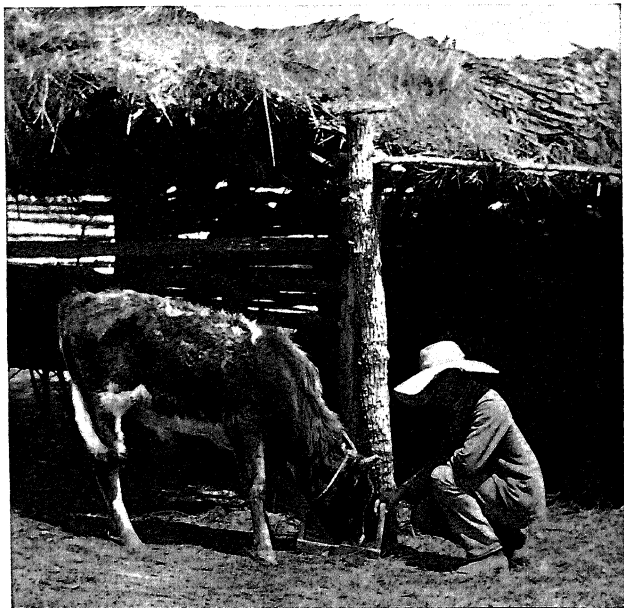
great deal to do with making troops effective in battle. The Southern men, too, were more accustomed to the saddle, and so, as a whole, they had better cavalry. But they never at any time had better soldiers than the men from our newer states. I'm not saying those from the older states had less natural courage than those from the frontiers; only that they in the beginning were at a disadvantage in the matter of shooting and rough living. About all the Confederate veterans I've talked with have the idea one of their men was equal to three or four of ours; but after making



On the Battle-field

allowance for the advantage of being on the defensive and in their home country, they didn't average a bit better'n we did after our men got trained."

The Bull Run losses in killed and wounded were two or three thousand on a side—not nearly what



Feeding the Calf

they were in many other battles of the war, but few conflicts were so momentous in their results. The victory gave the Southern cause backbone and brought to its aid thousands of waverers. Had the South suffered a decisive defeat, armed opposition to the government might have crumbled entirely away.

Three or four houses still exist on the battle-field

that were there during the fight. Notable among these is a large stone house beside the Pike that was used as a hospital by both armies. Another is a log dwelling occupied in war time by a family named Matthew. I got acquainted on the road with one of the present occupants of the Matthew house, and at parting he invited me to call on him. "Come in at meal-time, or any time, suh," said he, with true Southern cordiality.

This invitation I found it convenient to accept a day or two later, and I shared the family dinner, payment for which was absolutely refused. "We don't never charge nothing to nobody," said my hostess. The dinner was an excellent one of the humbler Southern type and I enjoyed it, save that the milk and butter tasted too emphatically of the wild onions that grew on the cows' grazing ground.

I asked my entertainers if they ever picked up relics on the battle-field, and one of the boys brought forth a pan full of bullets, brass buttons, and other rubbish. Sometimes the plough turned them out, sometimes the field streams formed by heavy rains washed them into sight. Certain bullets of peculiar shape they said were poisoned, but they could give me no authority for this belief. They occasionally found bones, and they told me that in a brier patch in one of the fields was quite a pile of them thrown together around a stake.

My hostess had been a little girl in war days. "We



A PITCHER OF MILK

lived at Thoroughfare Gap," she said, "and the soldiers was goin' back and forth there all the time. We was very well treated usually, but I reckon we got along better than most. The troubles that people tell about was mainly owing to the fact that the laws wa'n't very well enforced and everybody got to sellin' whiskey. So it was easy for the soldiers to get drunk, and then you wouldn't know what they'd do. For a long time we had some Union troops camped jus' outside my mother's fence. We was for the South, but they never done us no harm, and often they'd come in and talk very friendly with mother, and with father, too, who was an invalid and couldn't get around much.

"We had four or five cows, and the cows had to feed right on the soldiers camping-ground. I used to go after the cows every night, and a good many times the soldiers would help me get 'em. I was a little shy of the soldiers at first, but I got over that pretty soon. Maw, she'd always have drinkin' water ready for 'em, and when they were marching past, she'd tell me to carry it out to 'em. Sometimes she'd do cooking for 'em. She say they were away from their mother and she couldn't be rough to 'em. She never make no charge for what she do, but they was boun' to pay, and if she wouldn't take nothing, they'd give money to us children.

"One time some of Mosby's rebel cavalry made a raid up that way. They cleaned out Mawmaw's meat

house — stole all there was in it — and she told 'em, 'The Northern men treat me a heap better'n you-all do.' Oh, she had a powerful talk with 'em. They took everything they had any use for wherever they were. I remember they had their horses hitched down the road, and father and my brother Tom went to look at the critters, and Tom, he took particular notice of one, and he said: 'Pap, I know this horse. It's got a glass eye. It's Aunt Betsey's horse;' and it was. Mosby's men had stolen it, but we didn't dare try to get it or make any fuss.

"I lived at Thoroughfare Gap until I growed up and ran away to Washington to get married. Then I come hyar."

In all this section of the South running away to get married was accounted rather the nicest method for a young couple to become man and wife, and the easiest way to have a wedding trip. A railroad conductor on the line that traverses the Shenandoah Valley told me his train carried on an average three runaway couples a day. "You c'n always tell a wedding couple — you bet you can," said he. "They think it is something big to get away from home to marry. Hagarstown is their popular resort on my line. One minister there has been marrying five hundred a year right along, and that's a devil of a mess of them. His usual fees are from twenty-five cents to five dollars. He won't take anything less than a quarter, and he's turned a

many of 'em down because they hadn't that quarter. I know of one couple that went up to Hagarstown and got married, and then didn't have money to take 'em both home. It was seventy miles, and she went along alone on the regular train and he beat his way back on a freight."

The last forenoon that I spent on the battle-field a shower overtook me, and I made haste to the nearest shelter. This proved to be a house that in antebellum days was the dwelling of a negro, "Ole Jim Robinson." He was free himself, but he married a slave, and therefore his children were all born into bondage. Two of them he bought. The house at



A Ford

the time of the war was a small log cabin. It has been added to since, but the older portion is practically what it was, and there are numerous bullet-holes in the weather-boarding. Some of the trees, too, in the yard still bear the scars of battle. Ole Jim Robinson's son now lives in the house and cares for the little farm that goes with it. He came in out of the rain soon after I did and reported that he had seen the tracks of a 'possum on the borders of the corn-field where he had been "harr'in'."

"Is you?" said his wife. "Well, yo' let him alone. Doan' yo' bring no possum into dis house."

"Mother won't eat 'possum," explained the man. "She say dey look too easy. Yo' know when dey git ketched hit always seem like dey laughin' an' dey lie still an' make believe dey daid—an' when dey think yo' left 'em dey creep off jus' as mean! We hunt 'em in de night an' tree 'em wid a dog. If de possum git in a small tree, we knock him out, an' if de tree is large, we sometimes cut it down an' sometimes climb up it. We mos' gener'ly ketch de 'possum alive. He'll bite yo' if he can, an' we tote him home by puttin' his tail in a split stick dat pinch it tight an' keep him remind dat he is ketched. We carry de stick over our shoulder, an' when we git home, we put him under a tub to stay till nex' day."

I was in the family living room—a cluttered kitchen with broken and grimy plastering, and, conspicuous

among its humble furnishings, a bed and two tables beneath which was a medley of pots, kettles, boxes, and odds and ends. A fireplace served to do all the cooking, for the Robinsons had no stove. At one side of it was a pile of wood and chips and on the other side a basket covered with a bag—the temporary quarters of a brood of young ducks. Two clocks stood on the mantle with a lantern between them. One clock did not go and the other was far from correct. “In slavery times we never had no clocks,” said the woman, “so I never learnt to take care of ’em, an’ I doan’ have anything to do wid ’em now. My ole man, he doan’ tend to ’em very good either, an’ sometimes dey’ll be unwound three or four days.”

In one corner was a bureau, and on top was the family library consisting of a Bible and a recent subscription-book life of Queen Victoria. I asked the woman if she had read the latter, and she replied jocosely: “Good gracious of Father! I cain’t read. What talkin’ about! I never went to school an’ I doan’ know nothin’ much. I been workin’ in de cotton patch nearly all my life either hyar or down in Georgy. I was raised hyar, but after I marry, I an’ my ole man was sol’ an’ took down in Georgy.”

“Where were you in Georgia?” I inquired.

“Well, dat gets me. ’Deed, I cain’t tell yo’ to save my life. I done forgot, but hit was a right smart step from hyar. My master dar was a good man,

but his wife was a rattlesnake. Sho's you born she was! She said I'd been sp'iled, an' so I got my back whipped."

The shower which had interrupted my rambling was soon over, but it was then noon and I was hungry. I asked Mrs. Robinson if she could get dinner for me. I was quite ready to eat whatever her larder afforded, and she hustled around in preparation, and two little boys, Jimmy and Albert, her grandsons, helped. She adjusted the smouldering sticks in the fireplace and had Jimmy fan the embers into a blaze with a turkey wing. "Albert," said she, pointing to the chips, "yo' put on dat trash dar. Make has', or the kittle won't boil till night. God knows it won't. Dis gemmen's hungry. Well, I do think in my soul yo' won't hurry to save no one's life. Now bring in some brush from the yaird."

She mixed up a pan of batter and went to the door to see why Albert had not returned. The wind had blown down a big limb from a cherry tree near the house during the previous night, and the youngster was breaking off dead twigs for the fire and at the same time eating green cherries. "Albert, yo' come hyar!" she exclaimed severely. "If yo' don't, I'll half kill yo'."

The boy approached reluctantly, and she knocked from his hands the cherries that he still retained. "I reckon I'll have to be po'in' the medicine into you all



A NEGRO'S WOODPILE

de time if you doan' leave dem cherries alone," said she.

Meanwhile the fire had been getting low for lack of fuel, and she went out herself to see about the where-withal for its replenishing. The woodpile was reduced to one long, tough stick; but she chopped off an end and scraped up a few chips and presently had the fire briskly blazing. Then she took a spade minus a handle that served as a fire shovel and poked some coals out on the hearth. Over the coals she set a long-legged griddle which she had Jimmy wipe off and grease. He seemed to be expert at this task, and I hinted that he could probably do the cooking for the whole family if necessary.

Jimmy giggled, and his grandmother said reprovingly: "Wha' yo' laughin' at? I'll take sompin' and knock yo' down. If I 'pen' on you fo' a cook, I reckon I'd pe'ish."

At length the "flam cakes" were fried, the tea was ready, and she had Jimmy crawl under the bed and exhume some knives, forks, and spoons from a box. These he handed up one at a time, and she wiped each in turn and placed it on the table. She also provided a remnant of cold ham, and a little white sugar in a broken bowl. Yet the meal, though rude and long delayed, was not unpalatable, and my visit in that negro home was one of the most interesting of my experiences on the battle-field.

XI

JOHN BROWN'S TOWN



A Doorstep Maid

HARPER'S FERRY is the most picturesque village I have seen in America. The surrounding scenery is beautiful and impressive — steep, wooded mountains, cliffs, and tangled hills, and the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers flowing through the valley depths. In the angle, where the two rivers unite, stands the town, built tier on tier along the slopes of an abrupt

and lofty hill. Some of the buildings are many stories high on the lower side. They are usually of brick or stone, and have frequent dormer windows in the roofs,

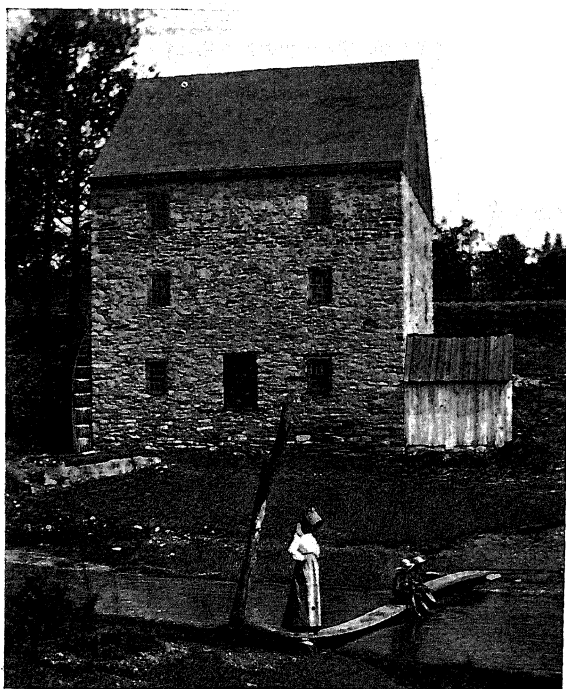
immense chimneys, and quaint piazzas and porches. I was constantly reminded of ancient Edinburgh, and I do not know where else I could go either South or North to get such a flavor of trans-Atlantic architecture and venerableness.

Evidently the village was formerly more populous; for vacant, half-ruinous structures are common, and windowless, staring walls are not lacking. The streets are narrow and rough, the walks of uneven slabs of stone. A Catholic church perched on a bluff above the hamlet does much to give the place distinction. It has a tall spire surmounted by a golden cross, and wherever you go you see this church looming skyward. The chief approach to it is by irregular terraces of steps cut in the solid rock, and these steps climb upward between various old houses and shanties and shabby garden fences.

I arrived at Harper's Ferry in the evening, and was no sooner off the train than I was accosted by a ragged, barefooted little boy, who said his name was Benjamin Harrison Butts. He wanted to guide me to a lodging-place. His recommendations of the particular house he would have me patronize were very ardent—the rooms, the food, and the woman who kept it were all superlative, and I allowed him to take me in charge. The house proved to be an antiquated structure with extremely thick stone walls, on a narrow street, neighboring a number of similar dwellings.

I thought the village quite rural and domestic when I awoke the next morning, for although there was a rumble of wheels on the rough town ways, I at the same time heard roosters crowing, and the twitter of swallows as they darted above the housetops, and the daybreak carols of other birds. Just before going downstairs to breakfast I looked out of my window and saw the proprietor of a shop on the opposite side of the street seated in front of his place of business with a little rifle across his knees. He was watching for rats, and this was his chief employment the day through. He had sprinkled some corn on the walk to entice his game from beneath the building, and whenever a rat came in sight, he crouched stealthily forward, took careful aim, and banged away. I did not see any other hunters among the village tradesmen, but they all spent a good deal of time in front of their emporiums idling at their ease, absorbing tobacco, and talking with such loiterers as chose to stop. Some of their shops were very curious little affairs and had old-fashioned show windows that were nightly protected against intruders by folding wooden shutters.

Benjamin Harrison Butts waylaid me while I was making my first tour of the town, and nothing would do but he must show me around. In his opinion one of the chief attractions of the vicinity was "John Brown's Cave," and we went two miles up the river and found a low tunnel-like aperture running back into



An Old Mill

cliff beside the railway. There is a tradition that Brown lived in the cave for a time; but he probably never knew of it, though it is not by any means insignificant, and has a length of a mile or more, and expands here and there into considerable chambers.

Not far beyond the cave, in a half-wooded hollow, through which courses a swift little tributary of the Potomac, stands an ancient grist-mill. It is a good-

sized stone structure, with a slow-revolving overshot wheel on one side. Close by, just above a ford, was a footbridge, one plank broad, and here two boys were paddling about in the water. An older sister was with them. She was planning to go fishing, for she had a hoe and was digging in likely spots alongshore for worms to use as bait. Meanwhile the boys were busy with a small tin can into which they hoped to inveigle some innocent minnows. Benjamin Harrison Butts was interested in their wiles with the tin can, and went and advised with them. He was a fisherman himself, and had several hooks stuck through the lapel of his coat ready for instant use when the occasion demanded. He became so absorbed that he was reluctant to go farther with me, and I left him behind. His excuse for staying was that he did not feel well. He thought the weather was unusually warm for the month of May. "When the sun is so hot this time of year," said he, "it gives you the spring fever—the 'hardly able' fever."

On my way back I stopped at a schoolhouse for colored children. It was decidedly better than the average of buildings devoted to negro child education, and was quite presentable, though some of the window-panes were broken and the holes stopped with papers and rags. The interior was fairly good, too; the seats were modern, and on the walls were a number of maps and unframed pictures. The master was an intelligent

and well-educated young man, and I thought he was doing excellent work. He had a kindly way with the children, and yet I noticed a savage-looking strap hanging conveniently near his desk. During recita-

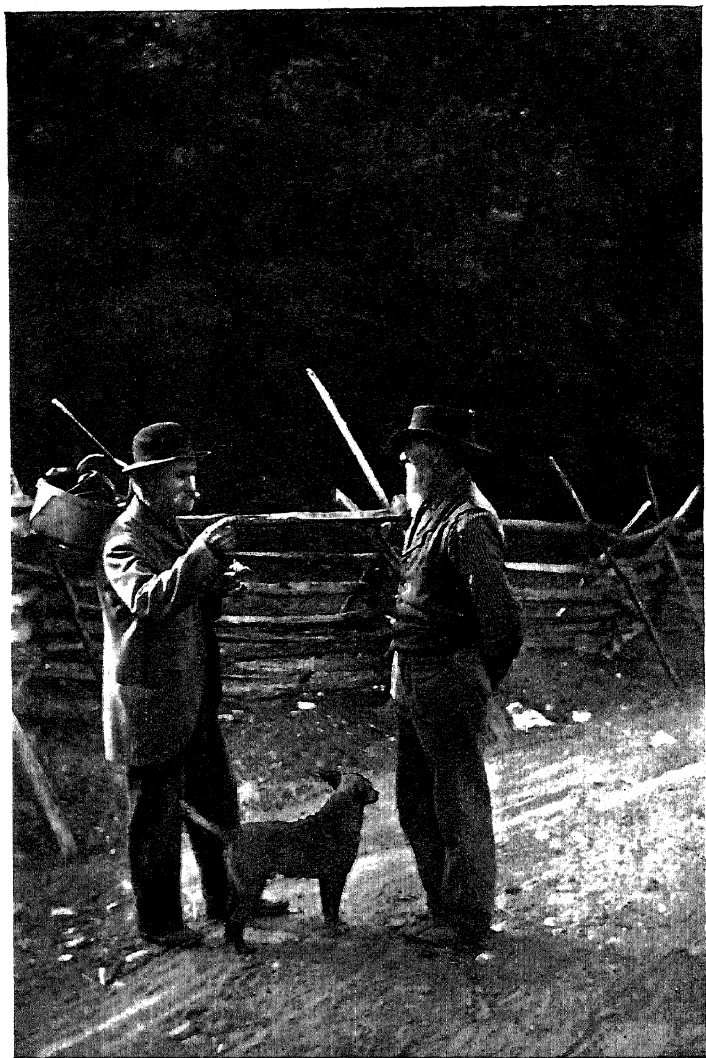


A Question

tions the children ordinarily remained in their seats and rose when they were called on by the master ; but for spelling they stood in a straggling semicircle around the platform. They did a good deal of wriggling during the spelling, even turned their backs to the teacher, or rested one foot on the platform, or retired a few paces and leaned against a desk ; and one boy went clear to the rear of the room and spit out of the door and leisurely returned. But the children were amiable and bright, and they acquitted themselves on the whole very creditably.

The great event in the history of Harper's Ferry was John Brown's raid, in the autumn of 1859. Every one in town knows the story of it, and many personally experienced its terror. A monument near the railway station marks the place where formerly was "John Brown's Fort," as the small brick fire-engine house came to be called in which he made his final defence. The raid was a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. To quote a citizen with whom I talked in his home kitchen, "We were as much surprised as you would be if I was to pick up that tea-kettle there on the stove and throw it at your head."

The town was at that time a place of five thousand inhabitants, and its chief industry was the manufacture of arms in a government armory. Brown, with his companions, some months preceding their foray, rented a farm five miles distant on the Maryland side of the



A CHAT ON THE ROAD

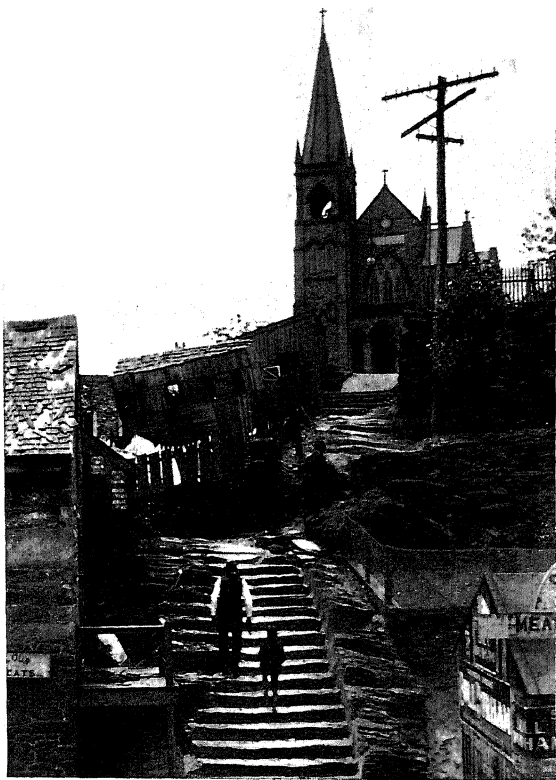
Potomac. It lay in a secluded woodland hollow among the high hills, and their home was a two-story log house no longer standing. The region, however, is much the same as it was then, though the cultivated area and number of families has somewhat increased. Another building which figured in the raid was a small log schoolhouse about a mile back from the river. Its site was pointed out to me by a man who lived close by. He was just coming out of his home gate, and I was returning from a visit to the farm Brown had rented. "Thar's whar it stood," said he, "right over the fence near that brook you see yonder. Brown intentioned to make it a depot of arms, and three of his men got in thar endurin' the night of the raid and filled it up with pikes and rifles, and when the schoolmaster come they made him prisoner and drove away the scholars. John Smith—that was what Brown called himself—and the rest of 'em had been aroun' hyar most of the summer. They attended chu'ch right smart, and they were all nice gentlemen. Ever'body, pretty much, liked 'em, and we had no *i*-dea about their havin' an insurrection. I used to meet Brown on the road now and then. I ricolect I met him over to Snufftown one day. That's a place got its name when thar wa'n't only three or four families livin' thar, and they all chewed snuff. People hyar have all called it Snufftown ever since, though the name in writin' is Elk Ridge.

"This place whar I live is Pleasant Grove, but it use' to be called Mosquitoesville. I don't know why. Thar ain't no mosquitoes hyar. You have to have stagnated water to raise mosquitoes, and we only got running brooks.

"Wal, about this Brown affair—I was a-workin' with some other men a few miles up the river at the time the trouble broke loose, and the first what we see that was queer was the trains standin' on the railway. Brown had stopped 'em and thar they stood—a long line of 'em whistlin' and snortin', and we thought the bridge had broke down or something. Then a man come along and said John Smith was thar at Harper's Ferry killing men, women, and children. But he didn't know what he was a-doin' it for; nor nobody didn't have the least notion what it all meant at first. They couldn't tell head nor tail of it.

"Of co'se we wanted to find out what was goin' on, and we broke off work and went down to the town. I allowed it was rather risky, but I soon see Brown didn't molest nobody exceptin' those that carried weapons, or that was jukin' round whar they had no business. He gobbled up quite a number of men and put 'em in the ingin' house, and he kep' 'em thar until the soldiers come and made him a prisoner. They didn't do that without a heap of fightin', and the way they captured the ingin' house was to get a great long ladder, which they butted agin the door a few times and busted it in."

At the close of these reminiscences the man said that when we met he had been on his way to look at



A Hillside Highway

a field he had planted to potatoes. "They're just comin' up," he explained, "and the bugs are a-gettin'

after 'em. Them bugs are a kind of beetle that's shaped a good deal like a terrapin, only they are smaller and their shell is striped black and yellow. They don't eat the vines much, but they lay eggs, and the grubs that hatch from those eggs are terrible. Why! I've seen vines all e't bare by 'em. The beetles crawl down under the lumps of dirt in the heat of the day, and if you go along then with a stick and poke over the nubs of earth around the vines, you c'n find 'em and pinch off their heads. I don't see 'em all, though, and I don't know but they're goin' to get the best of me. I got a pest on my peach trees, too. The worms are so bad on 'em I've about concluded to give up raisin' peaches. Some sprays their trees, but it don't do no good. Thar ain't much use for a man to work agin Providence.

"I'm glad I met up with you," the man remarked when we parted, and then he continued up the road and I went on down—down the same road that John Brown's little band had gone on that eventful Sunday night in October, 1859.

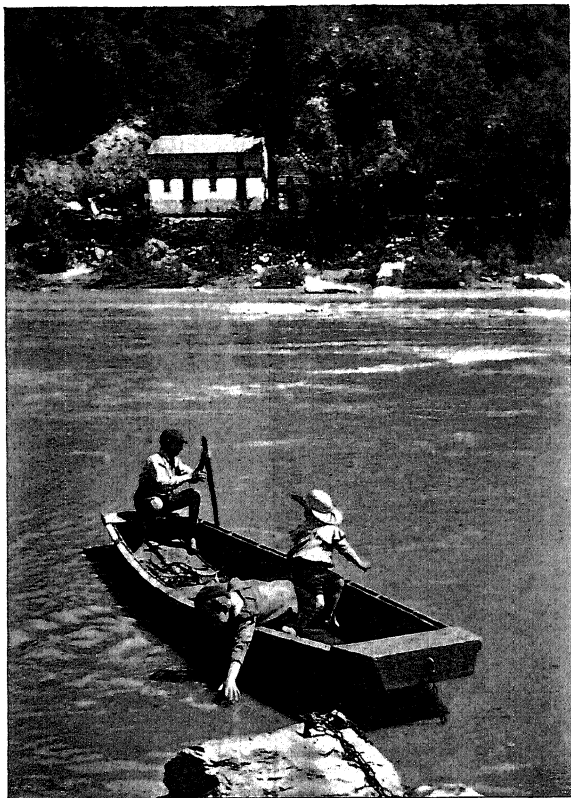
What I learned of Brown at Harper's Ferry consisted of fragmentary bits of gossip, but the whole story of his life is intensely interesting and dramatic. He was born at Torrington, Connecticut, in the year 1800, but the family moved to Ohio while he was still a child, and in that then rough frontier country he grew to manhood. His father taught him the

tanner's trade, but he was restless and visionary and that calling was soon abandoned. He tried surveying, studied for the ministry, farmed for a time, speculated in real estate, dealt in cattle, undertook sheep-raising, became a wool-factor, and finally attempted to establish a colony of free negroes in the Adirondacks. In nothing did he attain more than a temporary success, but he was not the less ardent to enter on some new scheme when the spirit moved. He went to Kansas in 1854, with money and arms contributed in the North, to contest the control of the state with the upholders of slavery.

Meanwhile he had been twice married and nineteen children had been born to him. In Kansas he became the head of a band of adventurers including several of his sons, and he did ardent work for the cause he had espoused, though this was often foolhardy, and some of his acts were scarcely less atrocious than those of the lawless guerillas he combated. He was a man of great courage and honesty, with a strong will and unusual physical energy, but oversanguine and fanatical and rude. In his way he was deeply religious; he knew the Bible thoroughly and he thought that angels guided him. His manner was impressive, his words blunt and dogmatic. In appearance he was tall and slender; in dress half deacon and half soldier. His hair was thick and bushy, his face smooth-shaven until his last years, when he wore a full beard. This beard on the day of the raid is described as hanging in snowy

waves to his breast, making his aquiline features seem singularly wild.

By 1857 affairs in Kansas became more orderly, and Brown's thoughts were soon evolving new plans in the cause of freedom. These plans continued vague and illogical to the last. Their essential purpose was to start a slave insurrection somewhere in the Virginia mountains. Then he thought enthusiasts would join him from the North, and fugitive slaves flock to his assistance from the South. He would take advantage of the natural strongholds of the mountains and evade such attacks as he could not overcome; he would raid the adjacent plantations for supplies. A struggle of this sort, he argued, could be indefinitely prolonged, and its success would result in the wiping out of slavery by law. If, at the worst, the project failed, he would retreat with his followers through the free states to Canada. He proposed to put rifles and revolvers into the hands of all his adherents who were capable of using such weapons, while those unused to firearms would be furnished with pikes. Brown made his plans known to a little company of New England abolitionists, and while they considered the scheme both unwise and doomed to failure, they felt they could not desert Brown who plainly would not be turned from the course on which he had determined. They therefore furnished him money; he bought guns and ammunition, and had a thousand pikes manufactured.



Some Fun in a Boat

Now he concluded to start operations by capturing the United States armory and arsenal at Harper's Ferry. This would be a great help in equipping the numerous sympathizers he expected would promptly

come to his aid. In order to study the situation at close range and thus gain knowledge to enable him to operate with precision when the proper time came, he rented the Kennedy farm five miles from Harper's Ferry, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, and made that his headquarters. Here he and his little band lived for several months, secretly getting together arms and ammunition, blankets, tents, and other neces-



The Church Brown attended

saries for a campaign. Their rather eccentric actions seem to have aroused no suspicion among the neighbors. They made some pretence of innocent occupation, and occasionally went poking about the mountain sides with picks and spades, excavating a little here and there to convey the impression that they were pros-

pecting for minerals. This was readily accepted as their real purpose, for it was in accord with the general belief that the wild crags of the vicinity sheltered precious ores of fabulous value, and that discovery and development only awaited the eye of science and the hand of industry.

About eight o'clock on Sunday evening, October 16, 1859, Brown's little company, with a one-horse wagon containing a few pikes and other implements, started for Harper's Ferry, which they reached two hours later. The entire force consisted of twenty-two men, but three of them did not cross the river. Five of the remaining nineteen were negroes, and it is a curious fact that while all the whites had been accorded offices in the provisional government Brown had planned, the blacks continued plain citizens and privates.

The raiders took possession of the bridge across the Potomac and of the bridge, close by, that spanned the Shenandoah a few rods back from where it joins the larger stream. Brown soon was master of the armory, the arsenal, and the rifle factory, and had captured the watchmen. Then he sent six of his followers a few miles out into the country to bring in certain of the prominent slaveholders with their slaves. The mission was successfully accomplished, and the slaveholders were imprisoned in the armory. The blacks were armed with pikes, but proved entirely

inefficient, and no doubt were a good deal befogged as to what was expected of them, and indeed as to the meaning of the strange events of the night in general.



The Meeting of the Rivers

A four-horse farm wagon had been confiscated on the foray among the plantations, and Brown ordered a detachment to take this wagon to the house that had been his home over in Maryland, and bring a load of pikes and rifles down to a schoolhouse not far from the river on the other side, and there store them. In the town itself a train had been held three hours before it was allowed to proceed, a negro had been shot by Brown's men, and all citizens who wandered into proximity with the invaders were being taken in charge as

fast as they came. By daybreak Brown had with him in the armory prisoners to the number of forty or fifty. Thus far everything had been done so quietly that the townspeople had no comprehension of the nature and extent of the trouble, and practically all save those who had been made prisoners slept on as usual. Even when the negro was shot the town was not aroused.

How strange a coincidence that the first person killed by these would-be freers of the slaves should be a colored man! He had gone to the bridge to speak with the night watchman posted there, but the watchman had been taken prisoner. When Brown's men confronted the newcomer with their guns and commanded him to halt, he was frightened and took to his heels, and they stopped him with a bullet. Several persons living near the bridge heard the sound of the firing, and some of them got up and looked out of their windows to learn the cause. It was densely dark, they could see nothing suspicious, and there was no more noise. They therefore returned to their beds with the thought that the disturbance was the result of midnight revellers shooting off their pistols in sport.

When Monday dawned and the armory bell failed to ring at the customary time and the citizens discovered what had happened, the more adventurous got out their guns and, from such points of vantage as

they could select, began a desultory fusillade on the raiders. They proceeded, however, with caution, for all sorts of wild rumors and exaggerations were rife, and they at first imagined the insurgents were a considerable force. The equipment of the citizens for warfare was but slender. The stores and the arsenal were in Brown's possession, and for some time the only weapons they had to oppose him were a few squirrel guns and fowling-pieces. Such, too, was the scarcity of ammunition that they were soon melting household pewter and moulding it into bullets for the occasion.

Brown had ordered that no life should be taken when it could be avoided, and during the fighting he often restrained his men from firing on unarmed citizens. Monday morning he tried to effect an armistice to save bloodshed, but this was refused, and from that moment his situation was hopeless. He was in a trap. His men were scattered in four or five parties, without means of mutual support or communication, and they had no supplies of either provisions or ammunition. By Monday noon all those in the detachment at the rifle works, a mile from the armory up the Shenandoah, had been driven out, killed, or captured. The other squads joined their leader in the armory, and as the prospect grew more desperate they took refuge in the little fire-engine house near the railway, carrying with them ten selected prisoners. Shots were

constantly being exchanged with their assailants, who were all the time becoming more numerous. The whole country was aroused, military companies were arriving, and at length Brown parleyed for leave to retire across the river on condition that he gave up his prisoners. Again he was refused. Night came. It had rained a little all day, and the atmosphere was raw and cold. Now a clouded, moonless sky overhung the scene of conflict. The firing had ceased and the engine house was shrouded in total darkness. That evening eighty marines from the Washington Navy Yard reached Harper's Ferry. They were under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, who later was the chief leader of the Confederate armies. Early the next morning he summoned Brown to surrender, and not getting a satisfactory response, ordered his men to charge. The engine-house doors were soon battered down, there was a short, sharp action, and the affair was ended. Brown was severely wounded, two of his sons lay dead or dying, and all the party who were in the engine house were made prisoners. Of the total force of twenty-two men who engaged in the raid, five escaped, ten were killed, and seven were hanged. Five of the townspeople lost their lives and eight were wounded, and one of the marines was killed.

Brown was tried for treason, conspiracy, and murder. He acknowledged his acts with frankness, defended himself with evident sincerity, and bore his

wounds and met his fate with admirable fortitude. He had aroused bitter animosity against himself, but his stoical courage won the applause even of his enemies.

John Brown died, but however mistaken and reprehensible his course may have been, "his soul went marching on." To quote the eloquent words of Frederick Douglass: "Until this blow was struck, the prospect for freedom was dim, shadowy, and uncertain. The irrepressible conflict was one of words, votes, and compromises. When John Brown stretched forth his arm the sky was cleared — the time for compromise was gone — the armed hosts of freedom stood face to face over the chasm of a broken Union, and the clash of arms was at hand."

XII

THE COTTON PATCH IN HARVEST TIME



October in South Carolina

WHEREVER in the South you find cultivated fields, you are very sure to find cotton. If we except a few limited districts, there is scarcely a farm large or small but that devotes a part of the land, and usually a large part, to this crop. Thus, when I wanted to see cotton-picking in progress, I had only to go South in the early autumn and stop

off at almost any point I pleased. I selected a place in South Carolina a hundred miles more or less from Charleston. This place proved, on acquaintance, to be a scattered, raw, half-wild little town.

The hamlet had two hotels, and I was told that no matter which one I went to I would wish I had gone to the other. I do not know just how literally the statement was intended, but certainly a half day at the Eagle House convinced me I should have patronized its rival. It was battered, dingy, and disreputable, the food was poor, and the talk I heard in the office had more swear words to the sentence than I would have thought it possible to interpolate. A leading character in the office was a man known as "Pinky Simmons." Another was an elderly resident of the hotel who was a good deal of an invalid. Much of the time he was groaning and wishing for morphine. The others said that when he slept after he had been drinking he "saw the blue monkeys," and the old man himself related how he had been disturbed the night previous by a colt that sat on the foot-board of his bed and gibed at him — whereat the company all laughed heartily. I learned that the frequenters of the hotel had the reputation of being professional gamblers, with Pinky Simmons as the leading spirit, and that certain rooms were reserved for the use of the élite of the region, and could only be entered by such as the landlord knew could be trusted. At any rate the conversation which came to my ears was very largely concerned with gaming, and I heard mention of playing poker all night, and of the increasing excitement and increasing stakes as the hours slipped away,

and of one individual who "had a big roll on" — more than a thousand dollars — and lost it all, leaving him "with not enough money to get out of town."

The surrounding country gave ample opportunities for seeing the cotton harvest. I did not have to go far from the village before I began to find the cotton patches, varying from those containing an acre or two neighboring a negro cabin, up to fields of a hundred acres on some large plantations. The number of pickers in the different fields varied likewise. There might be only a single person picking, or there might be a scattered score or more. The crops were good, bad, and indifferent — mostly depending on the care bestowed and the fertilizing. "That's a nigger's cotton," said a man to me when I asked him about some earth-hugging little stuff that had not attained one fourth the normal growth. The really good crops grew waist high, and the plants were snowflaked all over with the bursting bolls. Such fields were a sight to rejoice the eyes.

The district also devoted a good deal of attention to tobacco raising, and every plantation had several square little "barns" in which the crop was cured. Each barn had a shed roof projecting from the front, and under this roof were openings into two brick ovens. When a barn was filled, slow fires were kindled in the ovens and kept burning three days and nights, and then the tobacco was ready for stripping, packing in hogsheads, and shipping to market.

In my rambling I followed the "big roads" and the side ways and even the "nigger paths" until I became pretty thoroughly acquainted with the region; and then I resumed my railway journey and went on to another place that I fancied would be attractive from its situation on the map. I was a little disappointed on alighting from the train to see nothing save a rude station and two small stores with forest all about. The only white man who lived near was the station master, and when I observed more closely, I found he had a humble abode attached to the station at the rear. I could get lodging with him, I was told, but it was dangerous. I did not understand—he looked mild and amiable enough.

What I had to fear, however, was malaria. A mile or two away was the marshy Cooper River, and the station was on the alluvial lowlands. A very few nights spent on these lowlands would result in serious and possibly fatal illness. Yet the station master had lived there twenty-five years. He seemed to be fever proof, and he thought the rest of the whites were superstitious on the subject. None of them would stay a night in the low country except in cold weather, and even the keepers of the two little stores had their houses on the pinelands three or four miles distant. Thither I went, too.

I started to walk, but was soon overtaken by a negro driving an ox-cart, and I rode with him as far as

he went. He had a single ox harnessed like a horse and hitched between the cart shafts. The ox wore a



An Ox in Harness

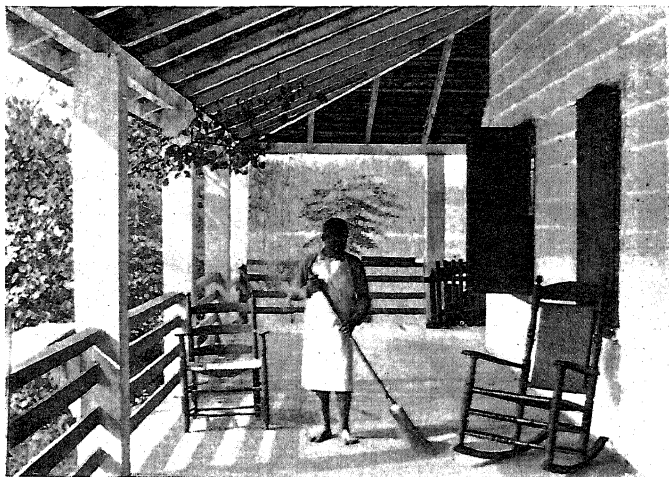
bridle, had a bit in its mouth, and was guided with rope reins. The negro kept gadding on the beast with the rope ends and we progressed at a brisk, jerky walk. My companion had only lived in this section a year. He had bought a piece of forest, built a cabin, cleared up a patch of "new groun'" by grubbing out the underbrush and "deadening" the big trees, and he had raised a crop of corn. Next year he would plant a portion of the land to cotton. He liked the region, but complained, "I have de country fever bad, an' I expec' I'll keep on havin' it until I git climantized."

We passed a number of negro houses with their little clearings, and we met several groups of colored women and children returning from work in some white man's cotton patch, carrying their empty picking-bags over their shoulders. One or two of the girls had found a few strips of bark in the wayside woods, and were taking the bark along, poised on their heads, for the cabin fires.

My ox-cart ride came to an end presently, and I trudged on alone. By the time I reached the pine-lands the night shadows were beginning to thicken. I had imagined I should find a village, but after some exploring I discovered there were only half a dozen houses in all, and these were mostly out of sight of each other, set hit or miss in the thin pine woods and linked together only by faint paths and byways. Where two roads met was a tiny church, but it stood as isolated and lonely amid the trees as did the houses. At one of these houses I found lodging—and how good it was to be welcomed out of the strange forest glooms into that friendly family circle to share its light and shelter and food!

Adjoining the house was a smaller building known as the lodge, and in that I spent the night. Its interior resembled a barn, for it was a single apartment with timbers exposed, and open above to the roof. The walls were whitewashed, and the apartment was roughly furnished for a combination chamber and

schoolroom. My sleep was intermittent. I did not mind the blur of insect minstrelsy that filled the air, but I was disturbed by a cow lowing somewhere near, by the barking of dogs, by a horse stamping and snorting in the yard, by a man who late in the night went yo-ho-ing and whistling along the road and wakened all the woodland echoes, and by a mysterious ticking in the shingles of the roof — was it death watches?



The Plantation Porch

Shortly after daylight, a little negro boy walked in at my door — the doors were not made to lock — and announced, “Mr. Lemair say dey have breakfas’ seven o’clock, sah.” Then he stepped behind a calico screen and filled a bath-tub with water and departed.

It still lacked something of the hour named when I came forth from the lodge, and I spent the intervening time rambling about the premises. My host's house was a broad, low building, painted white. A wide porch extended the full length of the south side. The home yard included several acres and was fenced with high palings. Far back toward the rear of the yard was a little barn, a shed for the hens, and a negro cabin occupied by a family that did the work at the big house.

The morning was sunny and quiet. The atmosphere was dim with a gauzy mist, the grass and leaves wet and shining with dew. I could hear the clatter of a woodpecker, the cawing of crows, and the steady tinkle of a cow-bell. After breakfast one of the girls of the family mounted her horse and galloped to the post-office at the railway station for the mail; and about the same time Mr. Lemair prepared to leave for his rice plantation on the Cooper River, seven miles distant. The task of hitching his horse to a buggy fell to a negro boy, Hezekiah — "Hezekiah, de prophet from de Bible; dat's his rael first name," his mother was wont to say when questioned on the subject. Mr. Lemair was soon on the road, and he would not return until dusk. In this manner he went back and forth every week day for six months. He had a mansion down by the river, but did not dare live in it between the dates of May 10 and November 10 on account

of the fever. To show how genuine was the necessity for this annual flight from the lowlands, he related that a few years previous a Northern enthusiast had bought some thousands of acres in the malarial district and advertised his intention to establish a model New England community. The man was told the climate would prove fatal, but he utterly discredited the statement, built fourteen miles of railroad to connect with a main line, and began importing settlers and selling land at forty dollars an acre that was worth two dollars an acre. The boom was of short duration, the colonists sickened, many died, and the whole enterprise was abandoned.

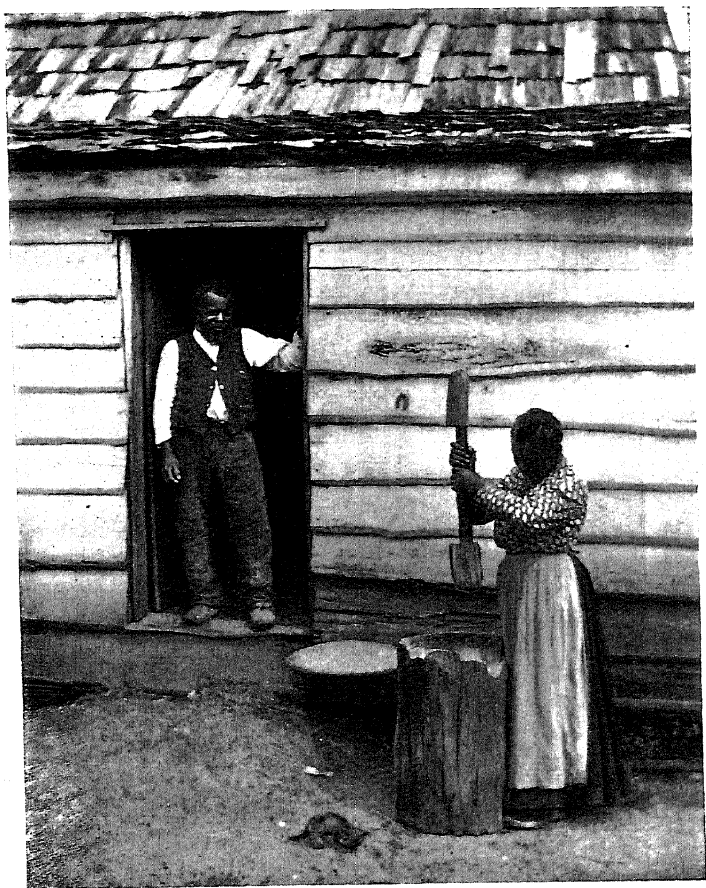
I spent the day in or near the pinelands. Not far from Mr. Lemair's was a twelve-acre cotton patch in one of the forest clearings, where a few negro girls were picking. Each of them had come furnished with a bag which she suspended from her shoulders to receive the cotton as she plucked it from the boll. Each picker had also a blanket or something of the sort spread in a convenient place, and on this from time to time was emptied the contents of the bag. When the day's work was done, the picker gathered the blanket up about the cotton and knotted the ends. Then all the parcels were taken in a cart or on the pickers' heads to the weighing place on the borders of the field and later to the barn.

Not much was doing in the cotton patch on this particular morning, for it was Saturday and colored help

is always difficult to get on that day. They have a habit of reserving the final day of the week for work on their own little places. To one of these negro homes I presently wandered. Its surroundings were unusually neat. The hard-beaten earth in front of the house, and the path that led to the road, were swept very clean, and vines and shrubbery grew about the porch. A woman, a young girl, and a boy came to the door and greeted me. They were very intelligent, with a pleasing air of good breeding. The woman was anxious I should have no mistaken impression of them. "I was brought up in the house among quality," she explained, "and I learned manners and got some education. I'm not like mos' of the slavery negroes of my age. They don't know the letter A from the side of a barn; but that's not their fault. Education wasn't much believed in for them, and if a slave was found with a book in his hands, the book was taken away and burned.

"My ole man, he was a field-worker. He's a good man, but he's rough an' low down. I'm shore married to him though, and I got to make the bes' of a bad bargain. While he's workin' he won't never wear a hat, and yo' cain't hardly make him put on any clothes only those that 're patched. He look like a different man when he's dressed up, but he let his bes' clothes hang in the house all the time."

The woman's feeling of aristocracy showed in her



A RICE MILL

work as well as in her talk. Certain plebeian tasks she would not do at all, and others she would not do in the customary way. She picked cotton in a basket, while every one else picked it in a bag, and she never would use the rice mill or the rice fanner. When the rice had to be pounded and cleaned, her daughter did it. This work was done at the rear of the house where there was a section of a log about three feet long with one end scooped out into a bowl-like hollow. Into this mortar or "rice mill" the rice was put, and then was crushed with a wooden pestle. That done, it was transferred to a shallow basket called the "rice fanner" and shaken free of hulls. The rice sheaves were stored in a barn about six feet square along with the cow peas and "blade fodder"—the last being bundles of corn leaves pulled off while green from the stalks standing in the field. Adjoining the barn was a pig-pen of rails that barely allowed the porker room to turn around, and beside the pig-pen was a cart of aboriginal pattern with wheels made of solid disks of wood sawed off the end of a large log.

The family raised cotton and corn as their chief crops, but I noticed they also had considerable patches of sweet potatoes and peanuts. Each peanut vine spread out in a close network over a circle three feet in diameter. Some of the vines had been pulled and turned roots upward to allow the peanuts that clung to them to ripen and dry. Later these nuts would be



Digging Peanuts

picked off and those that remained in the ground dug. The crows like peanuts and had been making regular raids on the patch. "And while they were getting the peanuts," said the woman, "one ole fellow stay up in the top of that daid tree there, and, soon as he see anybody comin', 'Awk!' he cry, and away they all go. But now we made this scarecrow yo' see hyar. We

jus' set up a stake an' put a hat on top, an' to make the rest of the man, we fasten together these New York Sunday papers my son in Brooklyn send us; an' since that the crows come an' set on that daid tree an' have their powwows, but they doan' dare come no nearer. Yo' see this stick out at one side? That is his gun, and this piece of paper hung on it by a string is his shot-pouch. Yes, those Sunday papers from New York make the bes' scarecrow what ever there was."

Ruthie and John, the woman's children, were bright and attractive, and they were gentle and polite, not only to me but to each other. Their mother had taught them to read and write. "I've tried my endeavor to give them a start," said she, "and yo' can ask ary one yo' please about the capitals of the states, or to spell, or yo' can write a sum on the groun' an' see them do it."

So I questioned them a little and I scratched a few figures in the dirt for them to add. They did the adding accurately though not quickly, and then I tried them with 3×24 . They bent over this problem and studied on it a long time. They could multiply 3×4 and 3×2 , but were uncertain how to combine the results, yet they finally succeeded.

The boy had an inventive tendency, and he had made a number of curious contrivances out of odds and ends he had gathered. One of them he called a "steam hoop," another "a street car." The latter

was a small cart with a box fastened on it upside down and on top of the box was an old ink-bottle fitted with a discarded lamp-burner and filled with kerosene. He would light up evenings and run the thing about the yard. It was very crude, but for a boy of ten who had so little to do with, it was very creditable.

While I was looking at the boy's handiwork, a hatless and patched old man came in from the field, and I knew he must be the woman's husband. He sat down on the porch, and in a chat I had with him he gave me his impressions of freedom as compared with slavery.

"It was like dis," he explained. "We wa'n't all equally please' to be made free. Yo' take de kerridge drivers an' house servants an' sech — dey had an easy time in slavery, an' dey was ve'y sorry to have freedom break up deir kingdom. When dey free, dey have to go to work for a livin', an' be no better off dan de rest of us. But de people what work in de sun an' de rain in de cotton-fiel', dey were all glad; an' yet I seen some good times in slavery. You could get thoo your day's task by two or th'ee o'clock, an' if you was smart, your master'd give you a piece er groun' to plant for yo'self. We each had jus' so much rashions ev'y week, an' it was enough; but now dar's a whole bunch er colored folks earn so little dey have to live off er scraps. I done so well I was made head hand; but when I was seventeen, master wanted to whip me, an' I run away to de woods, an'

I was in de woods six weeks. I'd come home nights to git food, an' some er de boys would bring me bread, so I had plenty to eat.

"I made a camp way back in de swamp, an' I hadn't been gone long till one day a white man name er Cy Lucas fin' me while I was cookin' my dinner. I heard the bushes crackin', an' dar he was befo' I could git hid.

"'What you doin' hyar?' he say.

"'I run away,' says I; an' I tell him how it was.



Old-time Plantation Quarters

"'I reckon I ought to kerry yo' home,' he says.

"He was a neighbor of my people, an' him an' dem wa'n't ve'y good friends, an' I say, 'Dey're

always abusin' you, an' dey won't thank you for't if you do take me home.'

"So he said, 'Well, doan' you steal nothin' off'n my plantation — take it off'n yo' own, an' I'll let you be.'

"Anudder time two white men see me while I was walkin' in de swamp huntin' fo' a pig to steal, an' dey know me an' holler, 'You'll be ketched tereckly!'

"I run, an' dey went off an' come back wid a dog an' a gun. Yo' ought to hear me cussin' den; but I had a club, an' I was boun' to fight until I die. I squat behin' a fence, an' de dog come runnin' after me an' jump de fence, an' he no sooner done dat dan — blap! — I hit him wid de club, an' de dog squeal an' git away from dar as fas' as he can, an' de men couldn't git dat dog to foller me any mo'. But dat didn't stop de men. Dey kep' after me until it got dark; an' dey hadn't no light an' dey los' deirselves, an' was knockin' aroun' de swamp all night. I knowed de way though, an' I put out for camp an' went to sleep. My master, he offer twenty-five dollars reward for me, an' after a while as many as a dozen men come out an' make a hunt for me, an' I couldn't git away from 'em. Dey took me home an' I was whipped. Dat taught me a lesson. I never give no mo' trouble, an' if dey jus' praise me, I work myse'f to death. I reckon dar's some now dat a whippin' would do 'em good. Dey git as sassy as a cow fly widout it. But

it's better dat de whippin's an' slavery are all gone. I like to think of what de Bible says, dat 'De day will come when ev'y tub shall set on its own bottom.' We're all free, an' dat day *has* come."



A Live-oak draped with Moss

Toward evening I returned to Mr. Lemair's, and the next morning I walked four miles to the nearest colored church, a rickety little building with a tiny cupola on top. As I approached the church I met a negro and asked when there was to be service.

"Right after de baptizin', sah," said he. "De candidate done gone along de road jus' now, an' I spec' dey baptize about ten or 'leven o'clock."

It was after eleven already, so I hurried and presently overtook the baptismal party waiting near some negro cabins for the minister. The candidate was a young woman dressed all in white, even to the turban on her head. She looked very solemn and scared. With her were two or three women relatives, carrying baskets and bundles. They said the baptizing was to be right down the big road in the creek, and I went on. I could see a ragged, fluttering figure not far ahead — a barefooted negro in a linen duster. I followed him for a mile, and then came to the creek. It was spanned by a little wooden bridge, below which the stream deepened into the pool that was to be used for the day's ceremony. The negro had stopped on the bridge and taken off his duster, exposing a blue blouse and dilapidated trousers. He said he was "an old-style Baptist." "Th'ee year ago," he continued, "we had nine head baptize into our chu'ch, an' no mo' since till dis one to-day. We got about thirty or thirty-five head in de chu'ch in all, an' dey each pay ten cent a month to suppo't de preacher. De two deacons collect de money at de chu'ch ev'y Sunday. De preacher have th'ee chu'ches, an' when he ain' hyar, we have a local preacher by name of Joe Saws. *He ain' git nothin' fo' his preachin'.*"

Now a little group was approaching from up the road, with a big, burly, white-robed preacher in advance ejaculating at intervals, "Glory be to God" and other similar

sentiments. He had a bushy gray beard, and he wore spectacles poised on the tip of his nose and looked very patriarchal. In one hand he carried a Bible and hymn-book, in the other hand he held over his head an umbrella, for the sun shone clear and hot. The candidate also walked beneath an umbrella—a big brown umbrella with a black patch on it.

“That’s an ugly place,” said the preacher, glancing disapprovingly at the pool.

The water in the stream was nearly stagnant, and its color was an earthy brown. The lofty green woods rose around and a light wind fluttered in the leafage. The ragged man who had been my companion on the bridge took a pole and waded into the pool, prodding here and there to show its depth, which was about three feet. Then he came out and stood at the water’s edge bareheaded, with the pole in his hand. The others gathered on the bank where was a little grassy open space, and the men hung their hats on the bushes. The service began with a hymn sung with melodious fervor, and then followed a long, vociferous sermon. Meanwhile the group grew until, toward the close, fully thirty were present. The later arrivals all came running and sweating, fearful they would miss the ceremony. Most of them collected around the preacher, others on the bridge. Some sat down as the sermon lengthened.

The preacher told the story of John the Baptist,

and he showed beyond shadow of doubt that immersion was the only true baptism, "and if yo' say that is not a fac', burn yo' Bibles!" he shouted. "Christ was a Baptist," he went on, "and so we shall be judged by a Baptist, and we shall be welcomed by a Baptist in heaven — those of us that go there."

Because the candidate was feminine it seemed appropriate that he should refer to the miracle of woman's creation. "Jewels," said he, "are found in the garbage and in the ice chest; yes, diamonds are very often found in the rubbish, but not so Eve. She was the climax of God's work — the finest and most beautiful of all the things He had made. She was created, not from common dirt, but from a crooked rib taken out of the side of Adam. She was in no way ordinary. She was an extract, — like cosmetics or perfumery which you ladies know about, — something better and mo' concentrated than the usual. There's a difference in things. There's great, there's grand, and there's greatest. The creation of the world was great, the creation of Adam was grand, but the creation of Eve was greatest."

After the sermon came a prayer, then some questions to the candidate about her faith, the genuineness of her repentance and good intentions for the future, and lastly the company sang a verse of a hymn, "Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone," while the preacher descended to the pool. The man with the pole walked



COMING HOME FROM THE POST-OFFICE

out and prodded around and stirred up the mud, and then helped the candidate down the bank and stood by to assist in the baptism. The preacher slipped his fingers down inside of the candidate's collar and got a good grip, and things looked desperate. The hearts of the watchers on the bridge and bank beat faster and the interest was tense. With a few words of invocation the preacher, aided by the ragged blue-bloused man, ducked the unhappy candidate backward under the brown water. They quickly restored her to her feet, and she, dripping and gasping, rested her head on the broad breast of the preacher. A bed-quilt was handed down from the bank and wrapped about her, and she was assisted up out of the water, and several of the women conducted her away into the seclusion of the woods to change her attire.

One afternoon during my stay at Mr. Lemair's, I roamed as far as his plantation on the river. My route took me past the railway station, and I stopped to speak with the malaria-proof agent. He was on his house porch looking through a tattered Webster's Spelling-book. "I found it among some old papers and things this morning," said he. "I hadn't seen it for a good many years. That 'old blue-back' learnt me most of what I know. It's the best book ever was made. All our great men were brought up on it. We used to have nothin' but that in the first years of our schoolin', an' we studied it thor'ly till we knowed

it. Then we'd have a reader and other books; but, now, dog gone if the children don't have readin' books befo' they learn their letters; and I can't tell how many lessons they say in a day, but it's too many."

I asked where the children of the region attended school, and he replied that the white people were too few and scattering to have a school, and the well-to-do hired a governess. The colored children went to school a little way down the road. The building was put up by a local negro society known as "The Spiritual Union Association." This society, the like of which under one name or another was to be found in many communities, had over sixty members and included both men and women. They met regularly once a month on Sunday evening, and at every meeting each member paid in twenty-five cents. If a member was sick, he received a dollar and a half a week, and in case of death the relatives received ten dollars.

I looked into the schoolhouse when I resumed my walk. It was about fourteen by sixteen feet, built of logs with a stick and clay chimney at one end. There were no desks inside, and the scholars sat on a double row of seats, each seat simply an unplanned board long enough to accommodate half a dozen children. A small table and two chairs completed the furnishings. Overhead was a ceiling of loose boards laid on some sagging joists. I could barely stand upright without

hitting the boards, and to pass beneath the joists I had to stoop. Into this dingy little room forty children crowded, and it was even more closely packed when the Spiritual Union Association met.

The road to the river led through the woods for a large portion of the distance. The tall trees were many of them draped with moss, there was a multitude of sweet and delicate blossoms, autumn berries were abundant, and the foliage and tangled vines grew with a rankness unknown in the North. Nor does the North ever hear such concerts of thronging insects, all busy with their musical saws and files and castanets. Now and then I would meet one of those long-faced caricatures of a hog known as a razorback, or some



A Pause on the Road

cattle with ears mutilated to indicate their ownership, and at intervals the road would be obstructed by a gate.

Mr. Lemair's plantation home was a large and imposing colonial mansion of brick, standing amid some enormous live-oaks, on a knoll that commanded a fine view of the broad marshlands along the river. On these marshes the rice was raised, and the planter had to keep up nine miles of levees. The land was ploughed with mules wearing broad shoes of wood on their hoofs to keep them from sinking into the mire. August was the harvest month, and then the rice-fields were thronged with workers who came from twenty miles around. The reaping was done with sickles, and the rice had to be carried by hand to the embankments where it was loaded on carts. Often the negroes had to work in mud up to their knees. They were considered immune to malaria. To a white man such labor would soon have proved fatal.

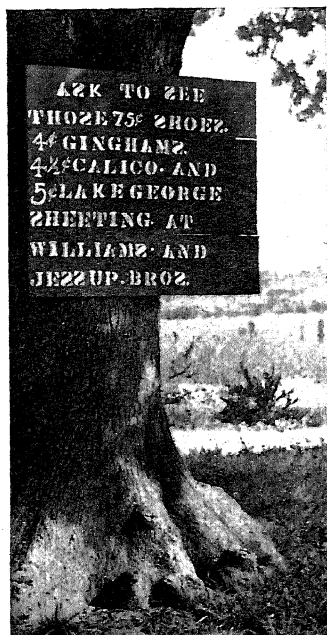
All day Mr. Lemair rides about in the saddle superintending the work on the big plantation. I did not see him while I was there, and toward evening I started on my return walk to the pinelands. I was directed to a shorter route than the one by which I had come. It was a forest byway — a narrow, weedy, little-used road with mud-holes here and there, and patches of corduroy in the wetter hollows. Once I made a mistake and went a mile or two out of the

way, and by the time I was back on the right road the sun had set and the darkness of the woodland depths I had to traverse was getting dense. Low in the paling western sky hung the thin new moon, but its light was too faint to be of much help, and I had more and more difficulty in avoiding mud and pools, and I was confused by the branching paths and sideways. At last I came to a negro hut. In front of it was a fire under a kettle and over the kettle a colored woman was stooping, preparing the evening meal. "Yo' take the nex' turn to the right," she said in response to my questions about the route, "and go down across the water slush, and pretty soon yo'll see a light. That is Mr. Lemair's house."

I did faithfully as she bade, took the turn, crossed a shallow stream, and saw shining through the tall tree trunks the planter's home light sending its cheering rays out into the black mysterious woods.

XIII

A QUEST FOR TAR



An Advertisement

A SOUTH CAROLINIAN who was one day enlightening me on the habits of the countryside mentioned that the people of his state were often nicknamed "sandlappers." "They call us that," he explained, "because sand is so powerful plenty ; and up in North Carolina they call the folks 'tar-heels,' because they use' to make so much tar thar. Yo' couldn't step aroun' much without gettin' into some of the blame' stuff. I know how it was. I use' to live thar, an' I ricolect

when I was a hobedehoy boy my ole man, jus' after dark one night, got his foot into a bucket o' tar that

happen' to be set near the house door. The weather was col' an' the tar was stiff, an' it took two men to pull that thar tar off'n the ole man's foot."

"Where would I go to see tar-making now?" I asked.

"Wal, I cain't rightly tell. Thar ain't nigh as many pine trees as thar use' to be, an' coal tar has took the place of the ole-fashion pitch-pine tar. But if you'd find them makin' tar anywhar, it would be up aroun' Fayetteville."

So I journeyed to Fayetteville, for I very much wished to see something of this primitive woodland industry, the fascination of which I had felt ever since I read about the process in my school geography. Fayetteville was formerly a place of considerable importance. It is on the banks of the Cape Fear River at the head of steamboat navigation, and before the war it was the market town for all the northwestern section of the state. Several plank roads radiated from it, and an immense wagon trade came to the town on these roads from scores of miles about. The zenith of its prosperity was reached in war time. The arms that supplied the Confederacy were manufactured there; and nine cotton mills were operating in or near the town when Sherman's army swept through the region in 1865. The Union forces left the mills and government works smoking ruins, and from this blow the place has never recovered.

I would have liked to step off the train into some of the traditional tar drippings, but I could discern no hints of tar on the depot platform, nor indeed anywhere in the town. However, I was told that while Fayetteville itself no longer handled tar, I would not have to go many miles out into the woods to find the tar-burning still going on, and I was recommended to a place called Spout Springs that I could easily reach by railroad. When I went thither, I found that the vernal suggestions of the name were deceptive. It was one of the forlornest spots I have seen in the South. As for its springs, it has few enough of any kind and none that spout, though there is a legend that certain of them once had that habit. The village consisted of a half-dozen houses of the poorest sort and a single rude, dingy store. To me the impression was wholly dubious, and I was surprised to find tacked up on the store porch among other notices a lead-pencil announcement from the registrar of voters appointing a day for an official visit to the community, in which he declared it was "the greatest pleasure of his life to come to Spout Springs." What phenomenal politeness!

Near the station was a great concourse of tar barrels, some full and some empty, and I concluded there was nothing more to do except to go a short way back in the woods to see the whole process of converting pine trees into tar. I went into the store to get

directions. The "sto'keeper," a puckered little man with a piping voice, said that just where I would find a



Dipping Tar into a Barrel

tar-kiln at that time he was uncertain, and he referred to some of the loiterers in the store. They talked the

matter over and decided the nearest kiln was one being burned seven miles distant by a negro named Brinkley.

It was already past midday and I tried to hire a team, but no team was to be had on short notice at Spout Springs, and I determined to walk. Fortunately a little darky boy of the Brinkley family chanced to be in the store, and my advisers turned me over to him as a guide. I surely would never have found the way alone.

Beside the railroad adjoining the station were some mountainous piles of sawdust and the rotting fragments of a big sawmill. This mill had laid waste all the country around, and what had been a noble pine forest was now a brushy wilderness growing up to scrub-oak. The tall trees were gone, and the road that the boy and I travelled was wholly exposed to the hot sunshine. Charlie, my guide, spoke of this road as "the great big road." It had been a plank road years before, and the sto'keeper had told me that in his youth "hit run from a hundred mile up the kentry straight to Fayetteville, and you'd see over one hundred and fifty wagons pass in a day." There were no indications that more than two or three teams a day dragged through its sands now. We followed it up and down the low hills for nearly four miles. At long intervals the scrub-oak gave way to a few fields composing a poor little farm. How any one could make a living in that remote forest country was a mystery.

At length we turned off into the woodland desolation, continuing our way by minor roads and paths. Round about were stumps and scanty bushes and thin grasses. Here and there rose a charred tree trunk, and the ground was strewn with black fragments. The responsibility for these conditions did not rest wholly with the sawmill. The doom of the region was pronounced when the turpentine gatherers came into the forest. In tapping a pine for turpentine the axemen cut two cuplike hollows — boxes they are called — on opposite sides of the tree near the base. Into these boxes the pitch drips from the wounds, and each wound is kept fresh for several years by constant clippings from the bark above the original cut until the gash extends nearly a dozen feet up the trunk and most of the resin in the tree has been drained away. Then comes the sawmill, and the trees are felled and converted into lumber. It is not very good lumber in the opinion of the natives. The vitality has been taken from it in getting the turpentine. As the Spout Springs sto'keeper expressed it: "The wood is half dead, and it won't last. You want to have the pitch in your boards and then they'll be with you." After the sawmill finishes, the tar burners cut the little pines that have been left, fires run through the ragged remnants of the forest, and the devastation looks as if it was complete for all time to come. The land is then almost valueless. Six or eight square miles of it around

Spout Springs had recently been bought by an Englishman — “jus’ a young strap of a fellow” — who was going to turn it into a game preserve. He paid about a dollar an acre.

The boy and I went on and on; and though the paths we followed became more and more attenuated until they ceased altogether, my guide kept swinging along and never hesitated. Yet he confessed to a fear of snakes, and he pointed out a white flower he called snake-bite which he said he would rub on if one of the creatures bit him, and that would take out the poison. Charlie was a model of docility and cheerfulness, and was very good company. He was of course barefooted, and his garments were wonderfully patched both behind and before. He had no coat, but wore a vest of his father’s that flapped loosely about him.

Finally we saw smoke rising on ahead, and we passed over one more ridge and there on the slope just below was a burning kiln. No one was near, and only the crackle of the flames disturbed the silence. The kiln was a broad, heavy cairn, seemingly of dirt, for it is requisite that the fire shall be kept well smothered and only allowed to burn outwardly in one thin rim. To begin with, a shallow basin twenty feet across is dug with a slight slant from the edge to the centre — a kind of big frying-pan to receive the pine “light’ood.” The wood is cut about ten feet long and split up small enough so that none of the sticks exceeds a thickness

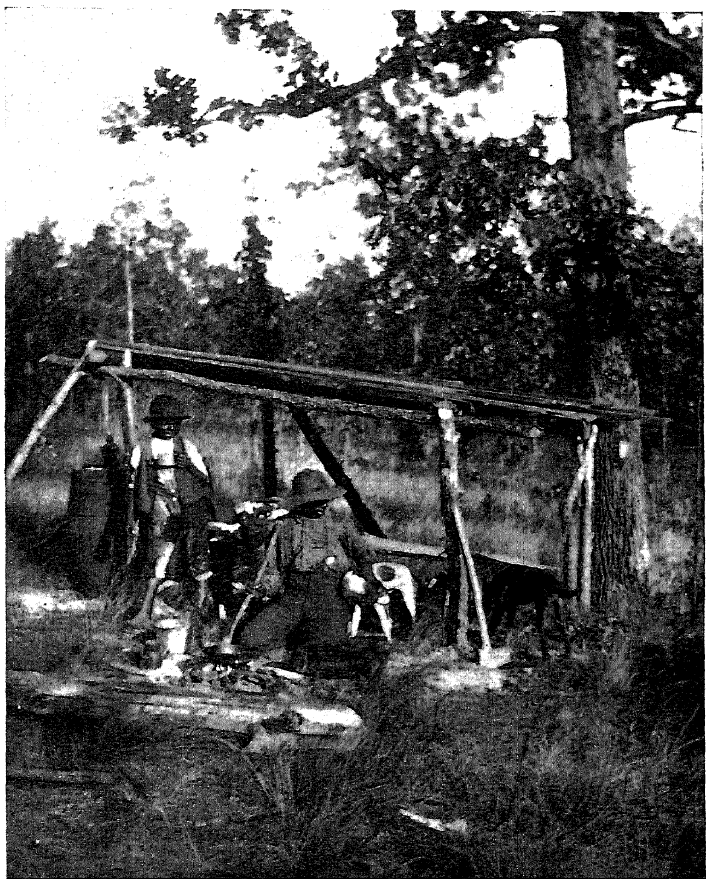


The Burning Tar-kiln

of three or four inches. It is piled horizontally in a circle, care being taken to preserve a gentle dip from the outside inward. When completed the pile is from eight to twelve feet high. A rough fence is now built around it, having a foot of space between the fencing and the lightwood, and this space is filled in with earth, and earth is thrown up to cover the top. In obtaining the dirt a great ragged ditch is excavated at the base of the kiln. When the fire is started, the tar flows to the centre of the kiln and thence runs out by an underground trough into a square hole dug for the purpose. From the hole it is dipped up into barrels. A fair-sized kiln will fill eight barrels.

I had not been long in the vicinity of the Brinkley kiln when a young negro came up the hill through the woods. Two dogs were at his heels and he carried a gun. He was the tar burner, and after we had spoken together, he took his spade and began to heave dirt up on the kiln to smother the flames that were breaking forth too vigorously. The fire had to be watched day and night during the whole period of burning, which lasted about a week. The negro had a rude shack near by — an open-sided affair made of a few boards. He prepared his own meals and did his cooking over a little fire on the ground in front of his hut.

When we started to return, the tar burner picked up his gun and went with us as far as the next hollow. This hollow was grown up to hardwood, and enough trees had been spared to make the spot quite attractive. A brook meandered through the glen, and there were cool shadows and green grass and flowers. I was not disposed to hasten, and as I stood talking with the tar burner, I happened to ask him something about "Brer Rabbit." I repeated several incidents in the life of that celebrated character which I had heard elsewhere. The tales vary in different localities, and my companion was soon relating his own versions of them. The boy, meanwhile, sat down on a fallen tree trunk, listening intently and never failing at the humorous points to explode with spontaneous



THE TAR-BURNER'S CAMP

laughter and a display of white teeth. Three of the stories I give below. The first will recall to the reader the Uncle Remus story with the same plot, yet it is unlike that famous tale in many particulars, and it has a flavor peculiar to the narrator's own occupation.

BRER WOLF'S LITTLE TAR MAN

One time Brer Wolf tell Brer Rabbit he gwine dig a well, an' he say, "Brer Rabbit, yo' tu'n in an' he'p me dig dis yere well, an' den we share de water togedder."

But Brer Rabbit say, "No, I doan' wan' to dig no well."

"What yo' do fo' water den?" Brer Wolf ask.

"I get up in de mawnin' an' drink de jew off de grass," Brer Rabbit say.

So Brer Wolf dig his well, an' Brer Rabbit drink de jew off de grass until dar come a time when dar wa'n't no jew. It was a ve'y dry spell an' de rain didn't fall an' kep' on not fallin' till mighty nigh all de springs an' branches an' cricks was plumb dried up, an' de creeturs couldn't hardly find water enough to keep from perishin'.

Brer Wolf mo' lucky dan mos'. De water in his well git ve'y low, but it ain't never quite dry up. Den Brer Rabbit got to slippin' aroun' to Brer Wolf's ev'y night an' Brer Wolf find his water gone and gone

—ev'y mornin' hit all drawn out. But he see Brer Rabbit's tracks aroun' his well, an' he study to fix a plan for to ketch him. So he think he make him up a li'l' tar man, an' he take some rags an' twis' an' tie 'em up into de likeness er a li'l' man, an' daub de whole over wid some er dis yere pine tar which is de stickinest stuff on de face er de yearth. He made de li'l' tar man, Brer Wolf did, an' den he set it up by de well an' hung de go'd on it.

Dat night, jus' fo' day, Brer Rabbit come aroun' same as usual an' he see de li'l' man an' he stop an' say, "Good mawnin', Mr. Man."

But de li'l' tar man doan' say nothin', an' Brer Rabbit say again, "Good mawnin', Mr. Man."

But de li'l' tar man doan' speak, an' Brer Rabbit, he say, "Give me de go'd, please suh."

De li'l' tar man jus' stan' dar an' keep his mouth shet, an' Brer Rabbit shout, "I say, give me de go'd or I'll hit yo' tereckly."

De li'l' tar man doan' 'spond, an' Brer Rabbit hauled away an' struck him side er his haid, an' Brer Rabbit's fist stuck.

"Hoc! Yo' think yo' hol' me?" Brer Rabbit say. "Yo' take keer! I got anudder ba-ad hand yere," an' he struck de li'l' tar man wid dat, an' dat stuck.

"What mean, holdin' me?" Brer Rabbit cry. "Yo' tu'n me loose or I hit yo' wid dis foot."

Den he lose de use er one er his feet. "Lord! what mean actin' dis-away?" he holler. "Yo' done got to do dif'rent, or I hit yo' wid my udder foot. Yo' better let go. I kill several men wid dat foot."

Blip! he hit, an' de foot stuck same like de udder. "Hey! yo' think yo' hol' me?" says he. "I got a tail. Ef I hit yo' wid dat 'ar tail I cut yo' clean in two."

De li'l' tar man helt fast an' doan' say nothin'; an' Brer Rabbit git his tail stuck. "Lord, Lord!" he say, "yo' de wors' man what ever I see. Tu'n me loose or I butt you wid my haid;" an' he butted an' got his haid stuck, an' he make de mos' awful racket a-bitin', knockin', and kickin' till Brer Wolf come out in de mornin' an' found him dar.

"Oh! you de man what steal my water," Brer Wolf say. "I teach yo' a lesson, now. I gwine eat yo' up, Brer Rabbit; but first I gwine give yo' de greates' whippin' yo' ever had in all yo' days."

So Brer Wolf tie Brer Rabbit to a big tree an' go off in de woods for to cut some switches to beat him wid. He hadn't been gone mo' dan two minutes when Brer B'ar come along de road. He see Brer Rabbit tie to de tree, an' he say, "What de matter, Brer Rabbit? What yo' doin' dar?"

"I'm a-waitin' for somepin to eat," Brer Rabbit say.

"What yo' gwine eat?" Brer B'ar ask.

"De folks what tie me hyar say dey gwine make me

eat a whole pig, two hams, an' ten loaves er bread," says Brer Rabbit.

Brer B'ar was hungry, an' he say, "Dat about suit me, Brer Rabbit, but yo' too small for so much."

"Dat de trouble," says Brer Rabbit, "an' if yo' wan' to do de eatin', yo' can take my place, Brer B'ar," says he.

Brer B'ar reply he willin', an' he untie Brer Rabbit, an' den Brer Rabbit tie Brer B'ar to de tree an' went off home. Co'se Brer B'ar git de lickin'; but Brer Rabbit ain' care. He always playin' de ole scratch wid de udder creeturs, an' he de smartes' er de whole lot. Brer Wolf, he de mos' prosperous, an' Brer Rabbit always sneakin' aroun' an' stealin' from him an' trickin' him. Time an' again he get right into Brer Wolf's kitchen when Brer Wolf step to de gyarden or de spring-house, an' he scoop de peas out'n de pot whar dey cookin' over de fire an' eat 'em an' den fill de pot up wid rocks. Brer Wolf, he forever sayin' he fix him, but he cain't never fix Brer Rabbit 'case Brer Rabbit too smart a man fo' him.

THE FROG, THE MOUSE, AND THE HAWK

De frog an' de mouse, dey use' to be two good frien's; an' ev'y day de frog come to Brer Mouse' house an' take dinner an' spen' long time. But Brer Mouse ain' never been to see Brer Frog; an' things

went on dat-away till bimeby Brer Frog say, "Brer Mouse, I been comin' yere right along since I doan' know when, an' now I want yo' to go wid me to my house an' make me a visit."

Brer Mouse say he be glad to go, "But, yo' live in de bottom er de crick, Brer Frog," says he. "How I gwine to git down dar?" says he.

"Oh, I'll take yo'," Brer Frog say, "I'll take yo'. All yo' need do is jus' to git a string an' tie one er yo' behime legs to one er mine, an' I'll take yo' straight dar," says Brer Frog, "an' we'll stay all day an' have dinner an' come back in de evenin'," says Brer Frog.

Brer Mouse agree, an' he git a string an' dey walk along to de bank er de crick. Den Brer Mouse tie one er his behime legs to one er Brer Frog's behime legs, an' Brer Frog he jump into de crick. Dat pull Brer Mouse into de crick, too; but de string was tie long an' de water wa'n' deep, an' when Brer Frog git to de bottom, Brer Mouse was a-swimmin' aroun' on de top.

'Bout dat time Brer Hawk happen along, an' he see Brer Mouse a-swimmin', an' he flew down to fin' out what de matter. "I reckon dat mouse make me a good dinner," says Brer Hawk.

So he pick up Brer Mouse, an' co'se he git Brer Frog at de udder end er de string what was hitch to Brer Mouse' leg.

Brer Frog doan' like dat, an' he begin to holler: "Hol' on, Brer Hawk! Hol' on! Yo' let me go. Hit's Brer Mouse yo' want."

But Brer Hawk say, "Dat all right, Brer Frog. Doan' waste yo' bref. I likes mice, but I likes frogs still better;" an' he kep' on a-flyin' an' carried 'em off into de woods an' dar he e't de both er 'em.

HOW THE MUD-TURTLE CAME TO LIVE IN THE WATER

One day, long, long time ago, de duck an' de turkle was a-talkin' togedder on de bank er de river; an' dey git ve'y frien'ly, an' bimeby de duck say, "My dinner all ready 'cross de river, Brer Turkle, an' I be much please' if yo' come wid me an' dine, suh!"

An' de turkle say, "I bleedged to yo', Brer Duck, but how I git over de river? I cain't fly, needer can I swim;" for in dem days de turkle always live on de lan'.

Den de Duck say: "Dat make no dif'runce, Brer Turkle. Yo' jus' hol' onto my feet an' I fly 'cross wid you."

So de turkle say he will, an' he take hol' an' de duck go flap, flap, takin' de turkle along wid him. But de duck, he ain't raelly want de turkle to his dinner, an' he wait till he git to de middle er de river, an' den he give hisse'f a shake an' drap de turkle splash into de water, an' de turkle done been in de water ever since.

"My mother say dey not tell dese stories so much now as in de ole times befo' de wah. In dose days de chillen thought dey was de best stories in de worl' an' reckoned 'em equal to Santa Claus an' Christmas. De chillen was always ready to listen, she say, an' yo' won't fin' any pusson, white or black, what been raised in de Souf but know all 'bout Brer Rabbit an' de udder creeturs."

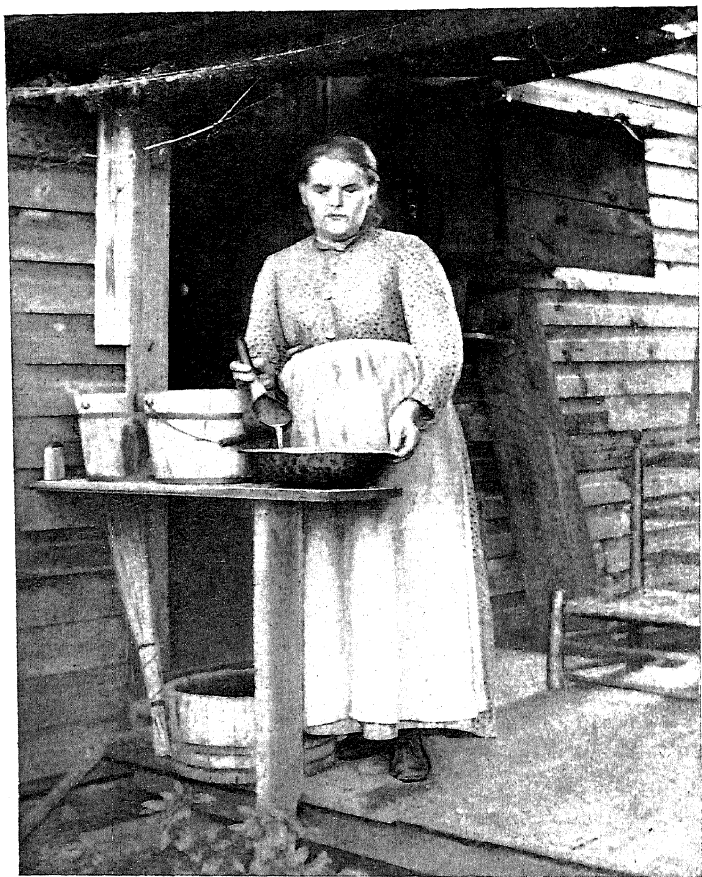


On a Trail

When the little colored boy and I left the pleasant hollow where we had been lingering, listening to the stories of the tar-kiln burner, the afternoon was far

spent and the air was growing cool. Our entertainer tramped away with his gun and dogs back to his tar works, and we went in the opposite direction across the woodland ruins to the main road. Shortly after we reached that sandy thoroughfare, the boy turned aside to go to his home and I continued on alone. Once I paused long enough to pull off a pocketful of fruit from the drooping branches of a persimmon tree. These trees were plentiful. They were rather slender and graceful and attained a height of about twenty feet. The ripe yellow fruit with its slight flush of red looked like small smooth tomatoes. Unless perfectly ripe the persimmons pucker the mouth, or, to use the Southern expression, "They are rough and tongue-tie you." But at their best they are sweet and luscious and melt in the mouth — all except the several big flat seeds that make up fully half their bulk. We have no wild fruit in our Northern woods to compare with them. Some people make "persimmon puddin'" which was described to me as "splendid," but the commonest delicacy produced from the fruit is persimmon beer. If this beverage is as good as people say, it must be fit for the gods.

I toiled on through the sand, munching my persimmons, and the sun went down and the dusky evening brooded over the scrubby forest. Just as the darkness was getting dense, I reached Spout Springs and sought one of the little houses beside the



AT THE BACK DOOR

railroad track and engaged lodging of an elderly woman who was chewing a snuff stick. The man of the house was at the well in the back yard drawing up a pail of water on the creaking windlass. That done he went to find "the fattening hogs," and afterwards he sat down indoors to wait for the cows to return from their day's grazing in the woods. They always came, but they took their own time about it and the milking was often much belated. "Hit air plumb discouragin' the way those cows act," affirmed the man. "Sometime I think I'll git shet of cows and not raise no mo' while I stay hyar."

"This ain't much of a place to live in since the sawmill got through," was the wife's comment, "an' we're gittin' ole. Hit's all I can do to walk about, and I don't go anywhar from home unless I'm hauled."

The grizzled old man now rose stiffly and picked up his milk-pail. "I hear the cows," he said, and went out into the night.

I was sitting in the kitchen, a rough shedlike room lighted by a dim kerosene lamp. In one corner was a little stove. The walls were lined with cupboards and shelves. Numerous parcels and pails were suspended from the rafters by strings to keep them from the rats and ants; and to thwart this latter class of invaders the table legs were set in tin cans filled with water. "Them red ants are the meanest little things you ever

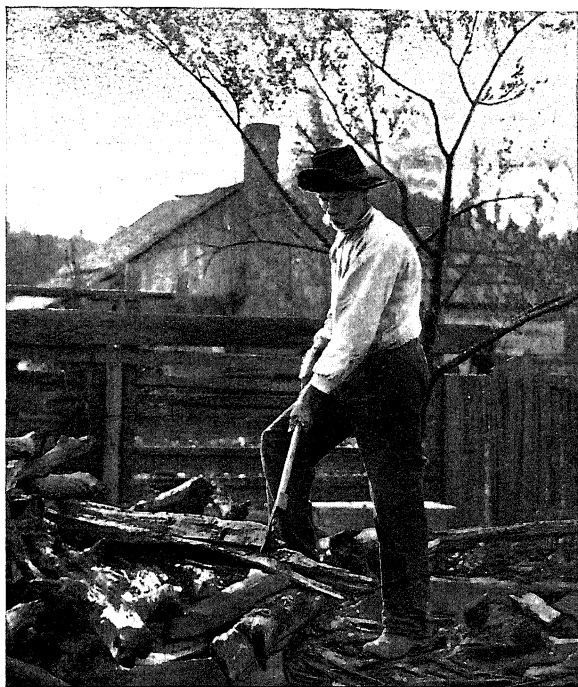
met up with," declared my landlady. "Sometimes in the mornin' I find a regular path of 'em goin' and comin' cl'ar across the floor. They're so small I cain't see 'em unless thar's a right smart of 'em together."

Several brooms were scattered about the kitchen, all of them of home manufacture. The biggest one was a "scouring broom" made of a five-foot stick of hickory. At one end the stick had been whittled down in shavings that were not quite severed from it, and then these hangings were tied about with a string to keep them in a bunch that could be used effectively. The rest of the stick was reduced to a convenient-sized handle. Another broom was a shuck broom made of corn husks fastened to the end of a stick; and there were several grass brooms consisting simply of bunches of long, straight grass stems. The brooms were needed, for the floors were kept constantly gritty with sand tracked in from the turfless yard.

Presently the man returned from milking and we had supper. For dessert I was introduced to a scuppernong pie. It was the first grape pie I had ever eaten. "I made hit with hulls and all," said the housewife, "and there's considerable sourness in the hulls, so yo' may like hit mo' sweeter."

I did not become enamoured with the pie either as it was or "mo' sweeter." I liked the uncooked grapes better. They are a light green in color and have a

pleasant, mild flavor. My landlady was enthusiastic over the muscadines, a wild black grape that grows



The Home Woodpile

on the edges of swamps and old fields; but it was as yet too early for them. "They are not sweet good until after the frost bites 'em," she explained.

When we had finished supper and the dishes were cleared away, we went into the main part of the house.

Here a brisk open fire was burning, filling the room with cheery light. I drew a chair up to the hearth and picked off the cockle burrs and Spanish needles and beggar lice I had collected during my day's tramping. while my landlady brought out a bed-quilt and began working on it. "I'm makin' this for my baby boy," said she. "He was married last June. You see hit's pleated all over. We call hit the pineapple pattern. Hit's right pretty, I think."

The fire died down low from time to time, and I could feel the night gloom and outer chill creeping into the room. Then some pine sticks were added, and the crackling flames leaped again and sent out their grateful heat and light. The man told me all about the mysteries of tar making, and he expressed great contempt for coal tar. It had few of the virtues of the pitchy product of the pine trees. This pine tar was medicinal, too. It was an excellent salve for a sore or wound, "and hit's powerful healthy to put a little tar in a cup and drink it with water."

The family retired early, and it did not seem as if I had been asleep long before I heard the old man moving about in the next room. "A chicken woke me a-squallin'," the man said when I came forth a little later, "an' I didn't know but one o' these hyar niggers workin' on the railroad was robbin' our hen-roost."

The alarm had proved to be a false one, but as the darkness of night had begun to pale before the coming

day, it was nearly rising time anyway and the man started his morning's work — that is, he fed his stock, milked the cows, and hacked away for a while at a pile of charred pine and crooked sticks of black-jack in a corner of the yard. When I stepped outdoors, I found my landlady in the garden picking some peppers. "I



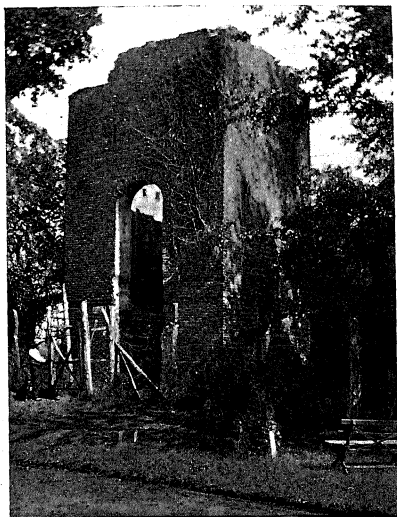
Garden Peppers

don't know how I'd keep house without peppers," said she, caressing the green plants. Then she pointed out to me the patches of collards, sweet potatoes, string beans, or snaps as she called them, and a row of tall okra stalks growing beside the straight path that led down the centre of the garden. Finally she called my attention to a great, coarse, wide-branching weed near the fence. "That thar's jimson," she informed me, "and hit's about the worst weed pest we have."

I went for a walk, after breakfast, and I tried to make up my mind to stay at Spout Springs a few days longer, but its desolation was too pronounced, and by evening I had returned to Fayetteville.

XIV

ROUND ABOUT OLD JAMESTOWN



The Tower of Jamestown Church

THE entire region in Jamestown's vicinity is rich in historic charm. Here occurred many stirring events in Colonial days; here, less than twenty miles apart, were three of the most notable towns of that period, Jamestown, Williamsburg, and Yorktown, and the district was a scene of conflict in two great wars. When I debated what place I

should see first in this famous neighborhood, I decided it should be Yorktown, and one October morning I walked thither from the nearest railway station, a distance of six miles. The road led across a monotonous,

half-wooded country that did not presage much attraction for my journey's goal; but I was happily disappointed. Yorktown is a village to fall in love with,—such a quaint, gentle old place, such venerable houses and great gnarled trees, and such a picturesque upheaval of grass-grown earthworks girding it about. Moreover it stands on a bluff gashed with frequent narrow ravines leading down to the shores of a broad inlet of the sea, and the views from these wild little glens, whether you look off across the water or back toward the village are unfailingly piquant and pleasing.

Before the Revolution, Yorktown was the chief port of Virginia, and several vessels loaded with tobacco were every year despatched thence across the Atlantic. But for more than a century the population has been gradually dwindling until now it aggregates only two hundred and thirty eight, and three-fourths of this small number are negroes.

On the farther edge of the village stands an imposing national monument commemorating the surrender of Cornwallis. The monument was finished comparatively recently; for though its erection was in pursuance of a resolution of Congress adopted October 29, 1781, ten days after the surrender, actual work was not begun on it until about one hundred years later. The memorial is fenced in by rude wooden palings that are half broken away so that the wandering cattle feed at the very foot of the lofty marble column. Indeed, as



Yorktown Street

I walked around the shaft, I nearly fell over a calmly ruminating cow lying in its shadow. Not far away is a fragment of an embankment that is pointed out as belonging to the time of the famous siege, and this is all that is left of the British fortifications. The other earthworks upheaving in great grassy ridges around the village belong to the Civil War. They are very peaceful now and are much overgrown with a low aromatic herb from which one's footfalls set free pungent and agreeable odors.

The siege of Yorktown was not of long duration. The British were cooped up there scarcely two months, and the bonds were not at all tightly drawn until

toward the end. The bombardment lasted only eight days, but it was at close quarters and wrought great havoc. All the town buildings were more or less damaged, and the house which was at first Cornwallis's headquarters was battered to pieces. He removed to the handsome brick Nelson mansion, still standing and still bearing the marks of the besiegers' cannon-balls. Tradition relates that, as the perils of the bombardment increased, this house, too, was abandoned, and the commander sought a cave under the bluff. He had the cave lined with green baize, conveyed to it a few necessities, and there he lived and held his councils with the other army officers. The appearance of the town after the surrender was one of dire confusion, the earth all upturned by the plunging cannon-balls, rich furniture and costly books strewn about the streets, and bodies of men and carcasses of horses scattered in every direction. Evidently it must have been exceedingly difficult to find a spot where a person would be safe from the searching fire of the allied batteries and the French fleet.

The surrender took place among the fields about a mile distant, and the locality is marked by a curious symbolic shaft erected by a patriotic private citizen. The shaft is of imported English brick cemented with German mortar, the former signifying the British and the latter the Hessian components of the captured army, and the whole is made emblematic of war by a

coat of red paint. It stands beside a little lane a few rods off the main road. Close by is a national cemetery where sleep some hundreds of Union soldiers who died on the battle-fields or in the camps of the vicinity. They have a parklike enclosure to themselves, with a massive wall of brick about it. Within the enclosure



The Spot where Cornwallis surrendered

the turf is like a lawn, the trees are kept trimmed, and the care is constant. The man in charge took great pride in the appearance of the cemetery, and he waxed very wroth in telling me of the depredations of certain beetles that clipped off twigs of his trees. He was a German who had never succeeded in fully mastering our language. "Dose bugs, dey haf pinchers

and saws on deir heads," he explained, "and dey cut off limbs big as my finger, and I haf all der time every day to keep pickin' dose branches up."

We were standing just inside the gate near a pump that adjoined the caretaker's tidy stone cottage. The man stepped to the pump and filled a cup with water, but paused as he was conveying it to his mouth to say: "Some beoples not like to drink dis water. Dey fill der cup and dey look mit deir eyes at der graves so many here, and dey drow der water away. But dose old fellows not drouble der water none. Dey been bury too long, and dis water not come from der ground nohow. It come out of a cistern dat fill from der roof. Der taste would be better from der ground. One man near here has an artesian well — ah! dot is der water. It is more light as cork and you can drink of it two or dree gallons at der same time and it will not hurt you."

On my way from Yorktown back to the railroad I wās overtaken by a colored boy in a buggy driving a horse that looked as historic as anything I had seen that day. I was getting footsore and I begged a ride. The boy stopped his steed and I climbed in. "Go on, hoss!" said my driver, and we got into halting motion. "She go kind er twitchy because dere's one er dese yere hoss-flies bodderin' aroun'," he apologized. "But I'll fix him;" and he watched his opportunity until the big fly lit on the horse's flank. Then



THE BEACH AT YORKTOWN

the boy leaned over the dashboard and made a sudden slap and the fly was annihilated.

The boy was from Yorktown and I asked him what the big shade trees were I had seen along the village street. He hesitated. "Yo' ask me too quick, boss," he said; but after meditating he told me they were mulberries.

"And what is this tree we are passing now?" I inquired.

He replied that it was a chinquapin. It looked a good deal like a birch, though the trunk was not so handsomely mottled, nor the limbs so sinuous. The ground beneath was sprinkled with burrs and nuts. These might have come off a chestnut tree, except that the burrs grew in larger and snugger clusters, and the nuts instead of being flat sided were little brown cones. The boy said the nuts were good to eat either raw or boiled, and that the children often strung them and used them for bracelets.

Among the bushes in the roadside tangles I was surprised to see clumps of real English holly and furze and broom. My driver called the broom "Indian sage," and said it was medicinal. "Yo' can make a tea out of it dat's as good as ox gall for heart disease," he affirmed.

The fields were turning sear and the autumn ploughing was being done. The corn was cut—all of it that would be cut. Some farmers put the entire stalks up

in shocks, but it was more customary to cut off the tops just above the ears, and stack these tops. After they had dried in the shock for about two weeks, they



Stacking Cornstalks

were carted to the barn, or perhaps were packed in a snug conical pile around a pole in the farmyard. The

smaller farmers not only harvested the tops of the stalks, but they picked off the leaves on the portion of the stalks left standing. As soon as the picker had gathered an armful of the leaves, he tied them in a compact bunch which he hung on a stalk to cure, and in a few days the "blade fodder" was ready for storage. The leaves of sorghum, or "molasses corn" as my driver called it, were also saved for cattle feed, and the stalks stripped bare, leaving only the brown tufts of seed at the top.

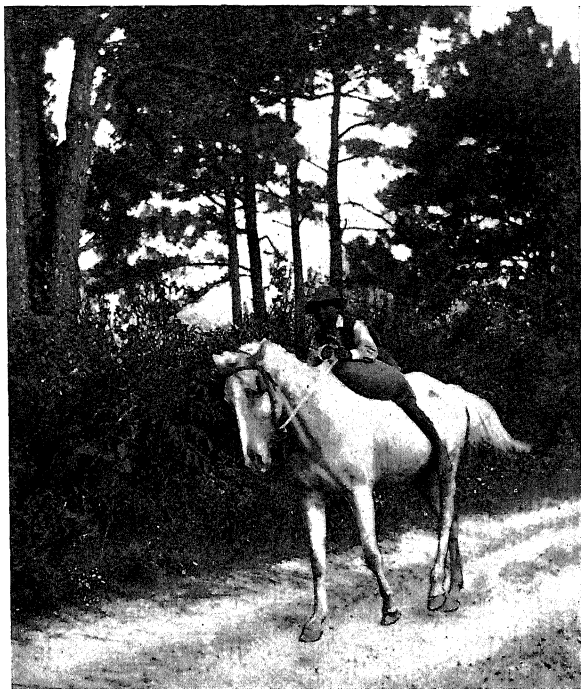
That night I stayed at the ancient town of Williamsburg, a most interesting place, built around a large, grassy square. Here and there a sedate colonial house has survived, and best of all is the old brick parish church with the graves of the early inhabitants clustering under the pine trees in the churchyard. At the head of the Duke of Gloucester Street, the town's broad chief thoroughfare, is the historic William and Mary College, and at the other end of the street formerly stood the House of Burgesses.

Jamestown is eight miles distant. I was advised that the only way to get there was to "hire a rig," but I preferred to walk. It proved to be a very toilsome expedition. The weather of the previous evening had been threatening, and from the hotel piazza I had watched a thunderstorm that wandered along the horizon, and flashed and rumbled, and lifted a gloomy cloud mass well up toward the zenith. Later the wind

rose and thrashed the trees, and rain fell in frequent showers all night. In the morning the sun gradually vanquished the clouds, but the mud and shallow pools of the roadway made walking far from easy. However, there were long sandy stretches which were fairly firm. I followed the "main travelled road"; for the route to Jamestown is kept well worn by the constant coming and going of visitors, and the other roads were mere trails by comparison. It was a lonely road wending much of the way through dense woods, and it was full of wild and primitive suggestions. Now and then there were houses and poor little clearings. In several instances the houses were deserted. I stopped at one such and was sitting to rest on the curb of the dooryard well when I was startled to see a large snake looking up at me from halfway down the well. The snake had adjusted itself on the edge of a board that had lodged there, and apparently was a prisoner in some danger of slipping off the narrow perch into the water below, and with no chance of climbing up the perpendicular walls of the well.

Jamestown is on an island of about sixteen hundred acres, three-fourths of which are arable. It is separated from the mainland by a creek a few rods across that is spanned by a rude bridge. Along the shores of the creek are salt marshes overgrown with rank grasses and weeds, and beyond the marshes are pleasant open fields variegated with oak and pine

woodland. In a little grove at the west end of the island is what is left of old Jamestown — a few graves and a ruinous church tower close by the shore of the



A Rider

broad river James. Not far from the church are the heavy earthworks of a fort. The fort, however, was not erected by the pioneers, but was one of the outlying defences of Richmond, thrown up during the Civil War.

The founders of Jamestown arrived on the Virginia shores in the month of May, after a rough winter voyage that began December 19, 1606; and their sentiments, as expressed by Captain John Smith, were that "heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation." There were only one hundred and forty-four persons in the entire company, thirty-nine of whom were the sailors who manned the three vessels. About half the others were classed as "gentlemen," and the rest as tradesmen and mechanics. It is supposed that they landed at the lower end of Jamestown island, or peninsula as it was then, and there they built the first houses, but they moved within a few years to where the ruins of the town now are. The land as they found it was no doubt grown up to a great pine forest. Just why they chose to settle here is uncertain, unless because the narrow peninsula afforded some protection from savage foes. As a matter of fact, the newcomers were less intent on making homes in the wilderness than they were on finding gold. Indeed, the search for gold at first engaged the entire attention of many of them, and they even loaded one of their ships with ordinary earth under the mistaken impression that it contained the precious metal. Presently their food gave out, the Indians harassed them, and they fell ill with fever. In four months over fifty of them had died, and but for Captain John Smith they would all have gone back to England. Captain



ON THE ROAD HOME

Smith found his fellows a very troublesome responsibility. Few of them were industrious or energetic. Some were pardoned criminals. But Smith was a leader with ability to rule. He punished idleness with starvation, and to cure profane swearing he had a daily account kept of a man's oaths; and at night, as a penalty for each oath, he poured a can of cold water down the offender's sleeve. Captain Smith wrote to the corporation in England which had fitted out the colony, "When you send again, I entreat you rather send thirty carpenters, husbandmen, gardeners, fishermen, blacksmiths, and diggers-up of the roots, well provided, than a thousand of such as we have."

With regard to the first buildings they erected, Smith says: "We did hang an awning (which is an old sail) to three or four trees, to shadow us from the sun; our walls were rails of wood; our seats unhewed trees, till we cut planks; our pulpit a bar of wood nailed to two neighboring trees. In foul weather we shifted into an old rotten tent, for we had few better. This was our church till we built a homely thing like a barn, set upon crochets, covered with rafts, sedge, and earth, as were also the walls. The best of our houses were of like curiosity, but, for the most part, far worse workmanship that could neither well defend wind nor rain."

In 1638 a much more substantial church was built than the makeshifts that had preceded it. The walls were of brick brought across the Atlantic, and the

tower of the church has endured even to the present. The edifice itself continued in use until Williamsburg, on account of its superior healthfulness, supplanted Jamestown as the capital of the colony in 1699. This change was a fatal blow to Jamestown, and the place was soon almost abandoned. It never had been more than a village. We know that in 1625 there were twenty-two dwellings, a church, a store, three warehouses, a guard-house, and, outside the town, two block-houses—one to guard the isthmus, the other to prevent the Indians from swimming across the back water that separated the peninsula from the mainland. The population was then two hundred and twenty-one, and in the palmiest days of the village the inhabitants did not exceed three hundred.

The brick church tower is the only surviving remnant of the old settlement that is at all conspicuous. It is eighteen feet square, and its massive walls are a yard thick. The church was not only a house of worship but a fortress of defence, and the upper portion of the tower is pierced with loopholes—narrow slits outside, but widening inward so that guns could be aimed with freedom from them, and yet expose the gunners very little. A rough barnlike structure has been built to cover and protect the foundations of the body of the church, and a few relics are displayed inside. The floor of the church contains a number of graves, and other graves gather around outside with

massive tombstones a good deal broken by stress of time and weather, and by the vandal sightseers. But the sightseers will do their ghoulish work no more, for the place is now in the care of an historical association and has been surrounded by a high wire-meshed fence suggesting at first glance that here is some vernal hen-yard. A custodian is at hand to admit visitors and answer questions, and volunteer such information and opinions as occur to him.

"You remind me of another Massachusetts man," said he, glancing at my name after I had written it in the register. "He was hyar some years ago, and he was drunk when he come and drunker still when he went away. We were fixin' things jus' then and not allowin' any one inside the church. But he was bound he was goin' in. He said he'd come to write it up, and how *could* he write it up, he said, if he didn't go in? I tol' him I didn't know — that was none of *my* business; *my* business was to keep him out. And I kep' him out, and finally he went away; but I kind o' reckon he wrote it up all the same."

The custodian pointed out various quaint epitaphs on the old stones, and called especial attention to this one:—

Here lyeth
WILLIAM SHERWOOD
A Great Sinner
Waiting for a Joyful Resurrection.

"That's the first sinner's grave I ever see," said my guide. "I've read a good many gravestones, but I've never found any but saints buried in other graves."

When I finished looking at the church and its surroundings, the guide took me out of the grove to a grassy level which he affirmed was the "Courting Green" or "Kissing Meadow," where was auctioned in the year 1619 the shipload of "respectable maidens for wives to the planters." He also pointed out the spot where were sold that same year the twenty "negars" brought thither by a Dutch man-of-war. This was the beginning of negro slavery in the United States.

The river opposite Jamestown is three miles wide, and from upstream its course is a straight sweep of seven miles. Thus the current and the waves have easy opportunity to eat into the alluvial banks of the island, and have already swallowed up a considerable portion of the land where stood the village. The water covers many remnants of the colonial hamlet, and when the current runs clear, the stones and bricks of the ancient house foundations and walls can be seen on the river bottom. The danger which the river threatens to old Jamestown has long been realized, and in 1901 the government completed a masonry breakwater that, so far as it goes, affords a lasting protection from the stealthy erosion of the current, and from the fierce waves that the winter storm-winds drive against the shores; but there is need of as much more work to assure the safety

of the spot, and preserve the historic church tower and the graves around it to the multitudes who, in years to come, will wish to visit the site of the first permanent English settlement in America — the cradle of the nation.



The James River opposite the Old Settlement

XV

THE NIGGERS



A Dwelling

AS soon as the traveller on his way south passes Washington the black man becomes a large and vital part of the population, and an ever present problem. You now find the interior of the better railway carriages placarded with the word WHITE, and the poorer ones with the word COLORED, and the negroes must keep entirely to the

latter whether they wish to or not. What you see on the railroad is characteristic of the whole social structure of the Southern states. The negro occupies a position of servility and inferiority, and he is constantly

reminded of the fact by restrictions when travelling, by discriminating laws, and by the habitual attitude of his white neighbors. The sentiment of the dominant race is clearly indicated by the universal use of the term "nigger" when a white person speaks of a black person. "Nigger" is recognized as opprobrious. It is like calling an Irishman a "paddy," or a farmer a "hayseed." It is equivalent to a kick, yet there is a superstition that it is not only the negro's due, but that it is necessary to administer these verbal kicks in order to avoid any possibility of his forgetting his inferiority. Besides, it is affirmed that the negroes will not work unless one is rough and vigorous with them. I was told that if I wanted a thing done I must say, "'Come here, nigger!'" Why, if you was to say, 'Come here, Mr. Jones,' they wouldn't do nothin' for you."

"A nigger is all right in his place," say the whites, but add emphatically that his place is very lowly and that he must not step out of it. If he fails to keep to "his place" of his own volition, they will go to any length of force or subterfuge to compel him to do so.

One of the few times in the South when I heard a black person called "colored" was at a private house where I lodged in Florida. A little girl came in and said to her grandmother, "There's a colored lady out on the porch wants to speak to you."

“Colored lady!” commented the grandmother, derisively. “Colored lady! Say ‘that nigger’!”

As she viewed things, her granddaughter had been using fancy and inappropriate language. Probably the child had learned the nonsense from the Northern people who frequented the region in the winter.

At a town where I stopped in an adjoining state there had been a great commotion some time before over a negro named Richard Foster. The negro wrote a polite letter to a local merchant from whom he was in the habit of buying supplies, requesting the merchant to call him “Mr. Foster” instead of simply “Dick.” Foster was a man of intelligence and education, and he expressed himself with entire courtesy, but the merchant was virtuously indignant at the nigger’s assumption that he or any other man with a black skin had a right to the prefix of Mr. The letter was passed around among the business men of the town, and swearing and heated denunciation were general. Such impudence could not be borne, and they got ready their guns.

Meantime the colored man had learned that trouble was brewing, and he wrote another letter “twice as long as the first,” apologizing for his indiscretion. “It was a beautiful letter,” his persecutors acknowledged in relating the incident, but it did no good, and they continued their martial preparations to teach the nigger the racial proprieties. There is no knowing



A COTTON PICKER AT HIS CABIN WELL

how serious the consequences might have been had he not concluded it was wisest to slip away. Friends sent his wife and goods after him and that region knew him no more, and the threatened invasion of the white man's rights was squelched.

"I know," said my informant, "Dick was a smart nigger, but he was no better than any other nigger. You Northern people don't understand this matter. If you would come down here and live six months, you'd see it just as we do."

Their view is that a negro must constantly in word and action acknowledge the whites' superiority. He must be respectful to them on all occasions, while it is optional with them whether they shall be respectful in return.

The negroes in expressing opinions about the whites were comparatively gentle and considerate. The sharpest statement I heard was from a New York colored man who was visiting his old home near Savannah. He said that business in the South was almost entirely developed by Northern capital. "They don't know enough down hyar to make money or anything else. All they know how to do is to shoot niggers. They've had a bad feeling toward the colored people ever since this last civilized war between the Norf and the Souf. They don't like 'em and yit they cain't git along without 'em."

The way in which this negro applied a mistaken

adjective to the war is characteristic of the racial relish for impressive words and resounding sentences. They make a specialty of politeness on social occasions, and often affect very superior manners on the casual meeting of acquaintances. Sometimes in an exaltation of courtesies they look from above down on the whites, and you may hear them speak of "Dat colored lady what workin' for dat white woman," and "Dat colored gemmen what workin' for dat white man."

In many sections of the South the blacks form the major part of the population, and it is only in the mountains that they are scarce. The mountaineers do not choose to have colored neighbors, and there is a more or less well-defined dead-line which the negro crosses to the uplands at his peril. "We bust mighty nigh every nigger that comes through hyar," they explained to me in the Great Smokies.

This sort of strenuosity is due to the fact that in the mountains most of the inhabitants are accustomed to do their own work on their own places, and they prefer to have their region in all respects a white man's country.

One effect of the prevalence of the negro in the South is to make it a land of cabins. To be sure the poor whites help materially to swell the number of humble dwellings of this class, but in the main they are the homes of the blacks. You see them scattered in groups or singly over the face of the country in the

rural districts, and you see them huddling on the borders of every city — shabby and unpainted, all about the same size, and most of them barren and depressing. The rustic cabins often gather near the “big house” just as they did before the war, sometimes flanking it with a line on either side, sometimes only on one side in a double row, sometimes built along the road that turns in to the plantation from the main highway.

It is an aphorism that you can tell a “nigger’s place” by its dirt and dilapidation. Poverty, ignorance, and lack of pride or ambition are general among the colored people. They simply exist, and the amenities of life are nearly altogether disregarded. However, those who own homes are very apt to make improvements and to take at least rudimentary care of their premises.

The commonest type of the rustic cabin consists of one room within the main walls and a shed-room attachment. At one end of the house, outside, is a big chimney, sometimes of brick, sometimes of clay-daubed sticks laid up cob-house fashion. Log cabins are numerous and are still built, but they are not very lasting and need a good deal of repairing and are gradually becoming obsolete. Double cabins are occasionally seen, though they are not always occupied by two families. Two households under the same roof are bound to quarrel, and the arrangement is not satisfactory. They quickly forget their disputes, and may be

on intimate terms within an hour of a genuine row, yet things are constantly occurring where one party or the other thinks its rights are infringed on.

The main room of a negro cabin is certain to have an open fireplace, and the leaping flames on chilly evenings fill the apartment with cheerful light. Two beds and a trundle-bed are likely to be included in the room furnishings, and if these do not suffice for sleeping accommodations, some of the family bunk on the floor. The ventilation is poor, the cabin is usually crowded, and it smells of eating and sleeping. The only advantage the negroes have over the dwellers in the worst tenements of our cities is that they spend most of their lives outside their hovels in the open fields.

"A nigger always has a dog, a poor nigger has two, and a desperately poor nigger has half a dozen."

Hounds and coon dogs are preferred, but any sort of a cur is acceptable. The dogs sleep in the house with the rest of the family, and they steal not a little of the household food. They are kicked and cuffed and abused, yet a dog prefers a colored master to a white one.

The number of places owned by the blacks is comparatively small, though slowly increasing. "Down in the district where I live," said a planter from southern Alabama with whom I became acquainted, "there are probably ten thousand niggers, and I don't

know more than a dozen that own their homes and have made any success in getting ahead. The niggers on my plantation work the land to shares, and that's the way generally. I furnish every family a house and twenty acres or so of land, and I furnish 'em tools and a mule. The mule and the nigger, you know, was made the same day, and they're just suited to each other. The mule is rough and so is the nigger. A nigger can't work a horse to advantage, but he'll control a mule better'n a white man can.

"At the end of the season my tenants turn over the cotton they've raised to me to sell. They reckon I can get more for it than they can. When I've disposed of it, I go to the bank for the money. Sometimes the cashier 'll start to pass me out bills, and I'll say: 'No, no, that won't do. Give me silver.' The niggers have no use for bills, nor for gold. The paper don't seem like real money to 'em, and the gold looks too small. So I have to get 'em silver. What they don't use right away they bury or hide somewhere in their cabins. There ain't many niggers that'll trust a bank, and silver dollars are the things for hoarding because they won't burn or mould or get carried away by rats. The town niggers have the same *i-dea* — no paper money for them — and a contractor who employs a right smart of 'em has to get a whole cart-load of silver to settle with the help on pay-day."



An Inventor and his Street Car

The renters require constant watching, urging, and instruction. Land let to them on the half-crop system is sure to deteriorate if they are left to do their own managing. Much of it is extremely light and sandy and washes badly unless the slopes are carefully terraced. To break the flow of water in rains, low, turfed

ridges are made at short intervals. The ridges must be perfectly horizontal, and they require frequent mending. If neglected, the fields get gashed with deep ravines and become sterile to the last degree; but they improve rapidly with proper care and continuous fertilization. Commercial fertilizer is beginning to be a good deal used by the negroes. This is due to the efforts of the landowners, who are obliged to demonstrate its power before the blacks will believe in it, for the renters are ordinarily too ignorant to understand how a small quantity of such stuff can have any appreciable effect.

In many sections it is still a common custom to do almost no fertilizing, but to keep taking crops off the fields until the dwindling harvests threaten to reach the vanishing point. Then pines are allowed to grow, and in the course of fifteen or twenty years the old fields become "new land," the pines are cut off, and the soil, with fertility somewhat restored, is again cultivated.

A well-to-do Carolina planter who talked with me about the characteristics of the soil accounted for his own prosperity by saying that he kept many cattle and let his land rest frequently and regularly by turning it into pasturage. He had seven or eight thousand acres, yet he oversaw in detail all his renters' labor. They had to go to work promptly each day and keep faithfully to their tasks, and they were obliged to plant and harvest at the proper time and in the right way. "I

have to push 'em right hard," he declared. "Hit's the only way to get the boolk of 'em to do things as they ought to be done — these young niggers are so triflin' like."

While the crops were growing, he furnished the negroes with supplies, and he did not allow them to buy so much of him but that when the crops were sold each family would have some money coming to it. "The niggers ain't contented if they have nothing to show for their year's labor," he explained, "and when that happens, they're likely to move off to some other place. But treat 'em as I do, and your niggers 'll stay with you for years."

As a rule the negroes move a good deal from plantation to plantation. They like to try a new place, thinking they may be better suited with a different landlord or that they may find a farm which will produce more with less labor. Another reason for moving is their gregariousness. They prefer to dwell in colonies, and will rarely remain long on a small plantation, while on estates that have fifteen or twenty families the changes are few.

The habit of living on futures is very common among the country negroes. A part of the prospective crop belongs to the landlord for rent, and the balance of it is mortgaged to supply the daily needs of the household. Sometimes the landlord handles the entire business, but oftener the mortgage goes to the

keeper of a general store, or to a bank which furnishes seven to fifteen dollars monthly until the crops are marketed.

Interest is from one to two per cent a month, and what is bought at the stores on credit costs from one-third to one-half more than it would for cash. Merchants who lack capital to sell on long credits are said to do a "chinquapin business," and they look with envy on their more fortunate competitors with the big per cents rolling in. The storekeeper who gets a forehanded grip on a nigger's crop leaves very little — "cleans him up," as the saying is. In fact, the negro is apt to think he is doing pretty well if at settlement he can pay his debts and come out even. I was informed in Florida that as a business proposition the crop-mortgage system was better than slavery. Some of the old-time plantations in the northwestern part of the state bring in more money now than they did before the war. The niggers work them just the same, and the white men get all the niggers make without the responsibility of caring for the black workers. A popular negro couplet sets forth the industrial situation thus: —

"Naught's a naught, figger's a figger —

All for the white man and none for the nigger."

Cotton is the negro's money crop. The minor products, such as corn, beans, cabbages, and potatoes,

are in the main consumed by the family, and if there is a surplus, it is exchanged for other needs at the stores. In the middle South, where wages are comparatively low, negro men working out by the day get forty or fifty cents and the women somewhat less. They earn most in cotton-picking time when the pay is so much for every hundred pounds gathered. They often realize then from seventy-five cents to a dollar a day. "If they could earn that the year around, they'd get all the money there is in the country," was one man's comment. The picking continues from early in September till nearly November, with an aftermath of gleaning that is not completed for a month or two longer.



Weighing the Day's Picking

As a whole the negro workers are docile and easily controlled, which is by no means always true of white workers. In many respects employers prefer blacks to whites whether in general industry or in the household. "If I have white help in my kitchen," said one woman, "I feel as if I'd got to work with them and be careful what I asked them to do; but I have no hesitation in ordering a nigger just as I please, and never think of needing to do anything myself."

A Charleston man said to me that he wished the negroes could all be deported, but such a wish is unusual. The ruling sentiment was voiced by a planter who declared: "Deport them and the South would be ruined. We must have their labor, and wherever the niggers go, I go too. If I had to work my land with whites, I'd quit. I couldn't manage or depend on them."

Whatever antipathies the South has with regard to the negro, it still wants him as a worker. They are the bedrock of its economic life. "If to-day they were all to take ship for Africa, who would chop the wood to-morrow morning? Who would make the fire, who cook the breakfast, who serve it, who would dress the baby, who would hitch up the horse, ply the hoe, and guide the plough?" In short, no organized movement of negroes out of the South will be permitted. In 1889, when a negro exodus was started

to Kansas, many of those who began the journey were obliged to turn back because the boats and trains were stopped by armed men, and several Southern states at once passed laws calculated to seriously discourage any one who was inclined to induce emigration.

With few exceptions the colored people are very easy-going, and even lazy. Their ideals are undeveloped; and animal comfort of a rude sort, a meagre outfit of cheap finery, and plenty of leisure are about all they care for. "They'll work till they get a little ahead and then stop and loaf," I was informed. "A nigger is like a Chinaman. He can live on most nothing. He don't wear but few clothes, and the pay for one day's work will keep him a week. He don't worry any about how he's goin' to get along by and by. If he's got enough for the present, he's as happy as a dead pig in the sunshine. You know the words of the Bible—'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof,' and 'Take no thought for the morrow.' Well, the niggers fulfil those sayings to the letter, dog gone if they don't; and I ain't objecting very seriously to their improvidence either. It keeps up our supply of cheap labor."

The most shining example of shiftlessness I encountered was a young colored man lingering about a Tennessee railway station. He wore overalls, had a handkerchief knotted around his neck, and an old hat

slouched on the side of his head, and evidently intended to work sometime. Meanwhile he was smoking cigarettes and was getting rid of his money by patronizing a penny-in-the-slot weighing-machine. When I first noticed him, he was on the platform of the machine and had just parted with his penny. The weighing done, he sauntered across the room and gazed out of the window; but he soon returned to the slot machine and considered it thoughtfully. "Boss," said he, turning to me, "I cain't read. Would yo' mind tellin' me what I weigh on dis yere?"

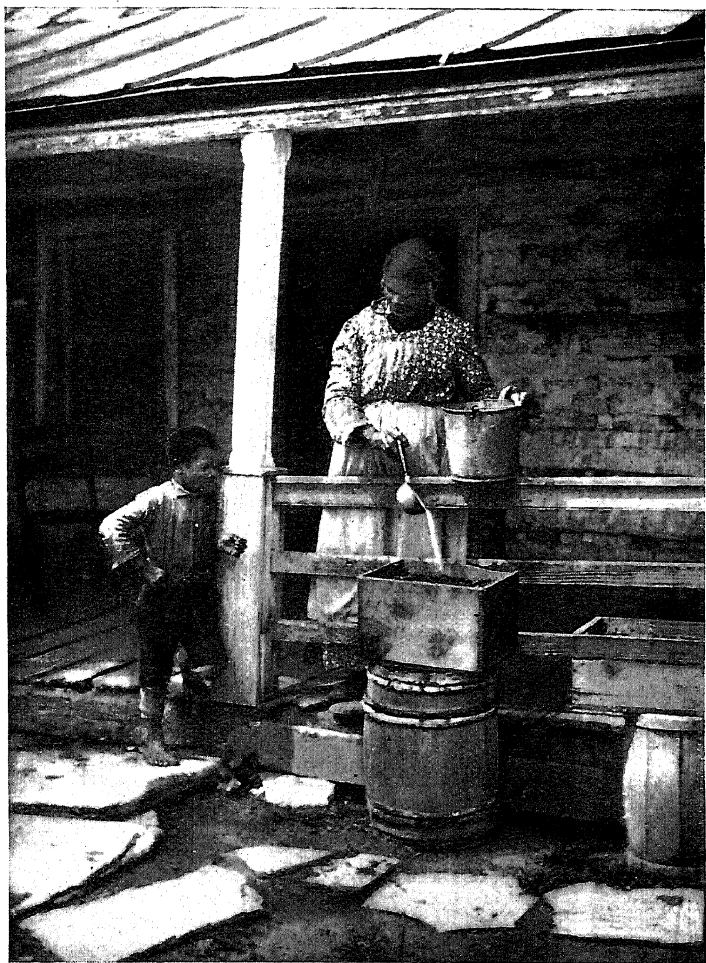
I was quite willing and he deposited a second penny, and after I told him the number of pounds, he resumed his loafing with evident satisfaction; but presently a colored friend of his came in and he weighed himself a third time, and the friend stood by to report the result. He was still in the station when I left, and for aught I know he continued to invest in that fascinating machine until his money was exhausted.

A reckless expenditure of cash in hand is a marked tendency of the race, and I recall it was mentioned to me in one village where I was stopping that, "If the nigger women see a white woman go past with a new-style dress on, they must get one just the same if they die for it. They're bound to be as like white folks as they can. Then there's watermelons. The niggers will go hungry to buy a watermelon. They can't

resist 'em, and they will buy 'em the very first of the season when they are most expensive."

To the credit of the negroes it can be said that considering their poverty and lack of thrift few have to be publicly supported. They assiduously avoid the poor-house and can usually supply their scanty needs to the very end. Of course a few have habits of saving, buy their places, and hide away a gradually growing accumulation of silver. If this sum amounts to as much as a hundred dollars, the lucky capitalist is regarded by his fellows as a millionaire. In the towns many little stores are owned by negroes, the majority, perhaps, with only about a wheelbarrow load of stock, but others that in size and equipment are all that could be asked. The better ones are often patronized by whites as well as blacks.

I was everywhere informed that the young negroes were less to be trusted than the older ones who started life as slaves. No doubt this is true of a portion of them, and naturally the servility the white man likes has become less common. The negro youth will no longer cheerfully spend half a day doing a white man's small jobs for a ham bone or a drink of whiskey. I have a vivid remembrance of the anger of a Virginian when a young colored woman did not accept with proper meekness some advice he gave her. She was at the back door of the hotel trying to sharpen a stick with an axe. "You blankety-blanked nigger," said



WATERING THE PLANTS

he, "that's no way to do! You'll cut your cussed hand off."

Of course a girl with any spirit would rather cut her hand off than take advice so sulphurously flavored. But he could not comprehend her view, and he came in much perturbed. "That flabbergasted nigger 'll cut her hand off, sure!" he declared, "and blamed if I don't hope she will! You used to could tell a nigger something and they'd listen to you, but that time's gone by. She as much as said she knew more than I did, and I'd rather be called the meanest name there is than have a nigger tell me that."

The negroes enter into their pleasures with zest and simple-hearted enjoyment. The young men take particular delight in balls and "treatin' the ladies." Evening visiting is common, and employers say that "you can work a nigger hard all day and he'll be walking off afterwards to some of the other cabins and be out till midnight." It is this propensity which in part accounts for the numerous paths through fields and woodlands which network the country. Such paths are a sign of a pastoral, primitive people, and they never fail to be beautiful to the eyes and suggestive to the imagination. It is by these paths that the news travels, and you can depend on the negroes knowing promptly all that is going on within a radius of fifteen miles.

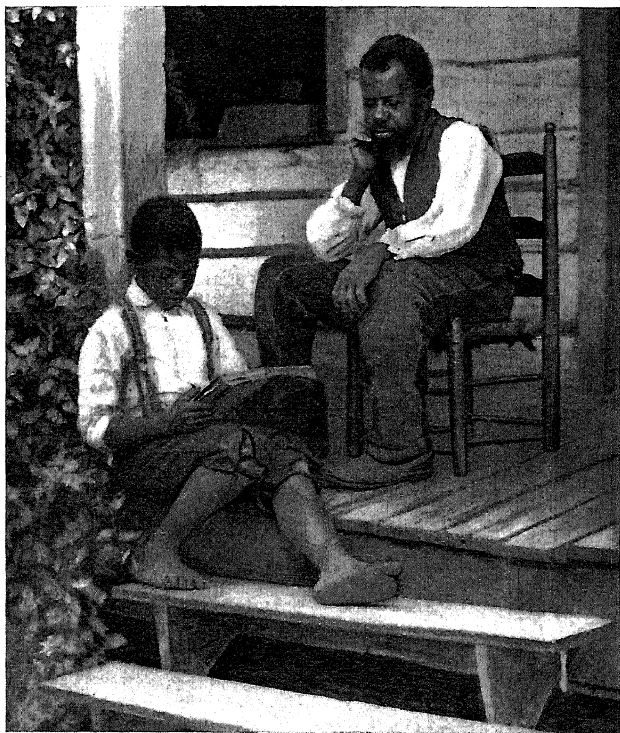
Many negroes are addicted to petty gambling. A game called "craps," that is played with dice, is their

favorite for the purpose. Some blacks carry razors and brass knuckles, "and a heap of 'em have pistols, too," I was told. The possession of such articles of offence and defence is apt to make the individual thus armed swaggeringly brave, and sends many a negro to the penitentiary who would otherwise be free. The blacks contribute very largely to the jail population, and always far outnumber the whites in the chain-gangs. To me the chain-gangs of criminal laborers with their striped clothing and encumbered legs looked strangely mediæval. Most of the prisoners, however, seemed well fed and hearty and not unhappy, and they certainly appeared far less grim and dangerous than the guards armed with double-barrel guns who stood by watching them.

The town negro is often a chronic loafer, thoroughly vicious and ready to commit any crime, while the country negro as a whole is declared to be law-abiding and truthful, though this statement is qualified with the comment that he has an inclination to commit small thefts. He appropriates an occasional bushel of corn and other farm produce when opportunity offers; and house servants take minor articles of apparel that appeal to their love of dress. "It is nigger nature to steal that-away and I expect it," said one planter to me. "They don't usually take anything but what they can conceal, but sometimes they'll tote off a yearling or a shoat."

A good many planters when they detect a negro

stealing give him the choice between arrest and a strapping, and the culprit is pretty sure to choose the strapping. One man with whom I talked thought the



Reading

fault was largely with the employers. "If you show a nigger that you are always suspecting him," said he, "and have no confidence in his honesty, he will most

likely be what you think he is; while if you trusted him, he'd be all right."

A gruesome sentiment is imparted to the South by the great number of places where some hastily judged victim has come to his death by shooting, hanging, or burning. The land is stained from end to end with blood shed by lawless hands. Unquestionably there are negroes who are to be feared, and they are a good deal of a nightmare to the Southern household. The whites all have guns in their houses ready for black depredators, and the fact that a man has no one at home but his wife and children is promptly accepted as a sufficient excuse for his not doing jury duty. Very little provocation is required from a negro to make a white man get out his gun, and bullets and lynch law are not by any means reserved for the more serious crimes.

An incident, which I heard from both the whites and blacks concerned, and which illuminates the possibilities of the situation quite clearly, was this: A white evangelist was holding meetings at a colored church, and was staying at the house of a negro named Terry. He talked very pointedly about his hearers' sins, and in doing so chanced to raise the ire of one of the women, whose relations with a prominent local white man were a source of scandal. She reported the preacher's remarks to this white man, who also took offence, and then the youthful aristocracy of the place

united in charging that the evangelist was "stirring the niggers all up." They felt they must put a stop to such doings, and they got out their guns, hired hacks, and went in impressive force and style to the home of the negro, Terry. He was absent, but the evangelist was found, and they ordered him to leave the town within half an hour. He tried to parley with them, whereat they became increasingly angry, and compelled him to start at once. Next they searched for Terry, and came across him talking with a white neighbor at the latter's gate. They felt he needed to be taught a lesson, and with their bullets laid him low, and, incidentally, wounded the white neighbor. While they were about it, they concluded they ought to give the community a thorough housecleaning, and decided they would get rid of Terry's son, who had a store in the town. That night they put a notice on the door of young Terry's place of business warning him to get out of the region. Young Terry was doing well with his store, and it was everything to him. He concluded to die in its defence, and he bought two revolvers and let it be known that, while he expected death, he proposed to do some shooting first. His courage had a salutary effect, and the lynchers decided, on cooler thought, to let him alone.

The intolerance with which the negro is regarded is a natural outcome of the former relations of master and slave; but it is depressing to find that, in all the years

since the war, so little progress has been made. Men of intelligence will soberly argue with you that niggers are not wholly human, that they are more akin to beasts, and should be dealt with accordingly. "If anything would make me kill my children," declared one woman, "it would be the possibility that niggers might sometime eat at the same table and associate with them as equals. That's the way we feel about it, and you might as well root up that big tree in front of the house and stand it the other way up and expect it to grow as to think we can feel any different."

I was solemnly assured that for a Southern white man to invite a negro, however notable and however accomplished, into his house as his guest, would mean that white man's social ruin. "It's like this," one informant remarked, "equality ain't safe. Now I've got a servant that was raised with me. He loves me and I love him. He'd do anything for me, and I've remembered him in my will. But if I was to take him into my family and treat him like a white man, he'd murder me in three days. They always do jus' thataway when you go to favoring 'em.

"And yet the President of the United States has had a nigger to dine with him! The South never got a worse shock than that. Up to then we'd thought a heap of Roosevelt down hyar. Why, we'd named all our dogs after him and members of his family; but we've changed those dogs' names since that dinner."

In one town I heard a tale of a colored army-officer who attempted to attend a white folks' church and sit in a pew among his white-skinned brethren. To them this was intolerable. They compelled him to get out, and "he barely escaped the worst scouring he ever had in his life."

In another town the old-time residents had been sadly shocked by the undecorous way the Northern people who frequented the place had of consorting with certain educated negroes of the vicinity. They would ride together, and a white man had been seen to sit in the carriage and hold the horse while three "niggers" got out and went into the store to trade. "Why!" said my informants, "a white woman and a nigger on a rainy day will even walk under the same umbrella." This was thought to be disgusting and disgraceful, and there was talk of passing a city ordinance making such things punishable by fines and imprisonment.

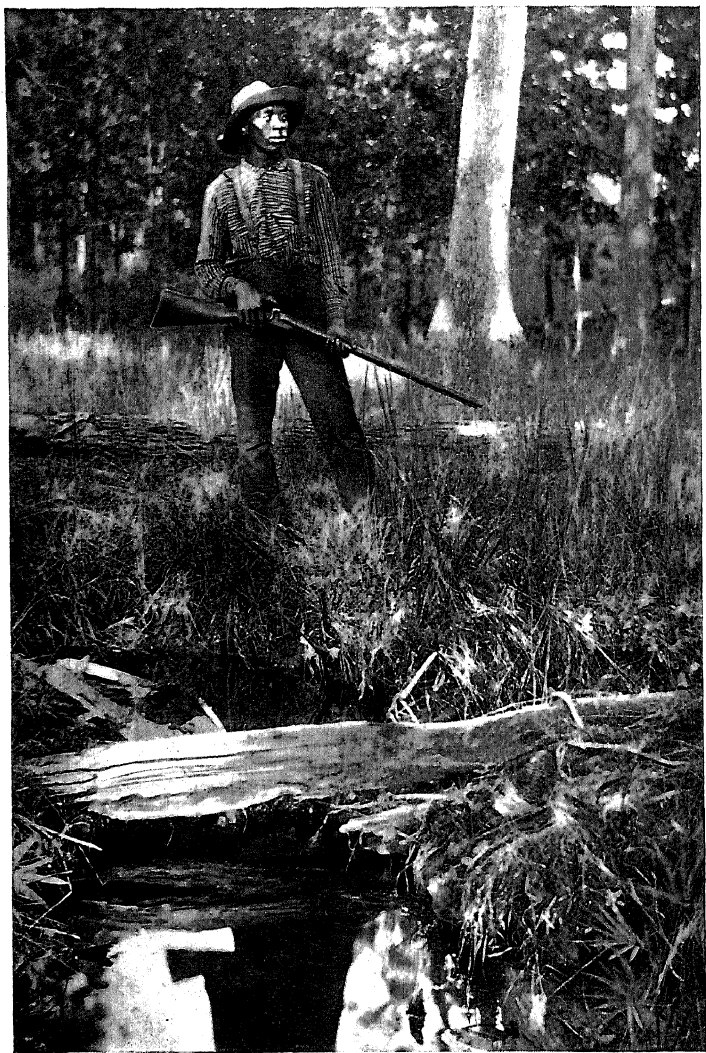
I do not wish to infer that sympathy is entirely lacking between Southern whites and blacks. In most ways there is no friction, and as a rule the whites are considerate and kindly. They help generously any reputable negro in misfortune, they contribute as a matter of course when a subscription paper goes around for the benefit of the colored church, and they will tell you, "There's a heap o' good niggers," though taking care to add, "and there's a lot o' darn-fool niggers, too." They remember with gratitude that during the

war the negroes behaved admirably. The white men were all in the army, and the women and children were left at home defenceless; yet nearly all the blacks stayed on the plantations and continued to do their accustomed work. "Had they been whites, they would have had a carnival of murder and robbery and gone away."

The most distressing experience the South has ever had with the blacks was directly after the war, when they were given the same rights to vote that the whites had, in spite of their ignorance and their long past of slavery. For a time there was chaos. "The niggers were turned loose just like a herd of cattle," an Alabamian enlightened me. "There never was a more fatal mistake. Not one in a thousand knew beef from a side of sole leather. We've got an ole nigger still living in this town who come clost to getting into the United States Senate, and he's only a common brick mason. I bet he couldn't tell in three guesses how much seven and six is."

The situation was intolerable, and the whites felt they must, by fair means or foul, disfranchise the blacks. One of the most charming gentlemen I met averred frankly that he had himself cast thirty ballots in one election. He acknowledged that this kind of fraud created a general lawless irresponsibility, but he would do the same thing again under the same circumstances.

It is the common opinion of the whites that the



A SQUIRREL IN SIGHT

negroes make their religion a fetich of barbaric superstition. "They pretend to care a heap for it," I was told, "and no matter what sort of lives they lead, they join the chu'ch because then they reckon the devil cain't get them. The religion of most of 'em is about like that of the nigger at one of their conferences that rose and got up and said he reckoned he'd broken every one of the commandments since they met last, but thanked God he hadn't lost his faith. The preachers are terribly ignorant, and they look on the Bible just as we do on the history of the United States, and take everything in it perfectly literal. Often they got no morals worth mentioning, but that don't hinder their preaching if they can talk glib and got big voices. A nigger has to have some ginger in his religion. When I was young, I used to go to a nigger chu'ch once in a while out of curiosity, and the service wouldn't git fur along before the worshippers would be singin' and swayin'. Then they'd begin to rar' so't the most excited ones'd have to be held, and pretty soon the whole darn thing would get to shoutin'. When they called up the mourners, they'd jus' tear the house all to pieces. It was like a lot of horses kicking in a stable. You could hear 'em a mile. And I've seen their preacher git up on the pulpit on all fours and sway and pitch and whoop and holler like he was crazy ; but that's the kind of preaching the average ole country nigger enjoys.

“To show you how ignorant the niggers are in their religion — there was a balloon ascension a while ago at Mobile, and a man went up dressed all in circus colors and spangles. The balloon came down a few miles out of the city near the cabin of a gray-haired nigger about eighty-nine years old. The nigger, he run out to the man, and seein’ him so fancy dressed, he thought he’d come straight from heaven, and he says, ‘Howdy, Mas’r Jesus, how’s yo’ pa?’”

The opinion that religion possessed no charm for the negroes unless they can demonstrate their fervor in shouting and acrobatic earnestness finds plenty of confirmation in real life, yet I have attended services that were admirably decorous, and where the eloquent good sense of the preacher compared favorably with anything I heard from the pulpits of the whites.

The character and learning of their ministers is doubtless quite open to criticism. They are often blind leaders of the blind, and the impulse which takes them into the pulpit is frequently not unlike that of the brother who got his “call” while he was at his farm work. Said he, “Dis cotton field’s mighty hot, an’ I believe, afore Gawd, I’m called to preach!” yet this sort of thing is growing less common.

The negro churches are on the village outskirts, or off still farther on some poor spot that has no value for other purposes. I heard of one colored congregation which aspired to build on a desirable site in the

niddle of the village ; but the whites threatened that if that was done, the church would be burned within two days after it was finished, and the project was abandoned. The country churches are nearly always dis-



A Campmeeting Building

nal little structures with leaky roofs, broken windows, uncertain foundations, and other marks of careless poverty. Many of the preachers have two or three churches in their charge at which they preach in turn. A pastor's entire salary is very likely not over one hundred dollars, and he usually has a small farm to help eke out a livelihood.

"The niggers believe in schoolin'," I was told. "Yes, they're all anxious to get an education, and they have good memories and do first rate if they take hold

right; but it is apt to make 'em above workin'. The kind of school that teaches 'em trades is perhaps the best, but they soon get tired of the trade they've learned and try something else they think they'll like better. There's one thing, though, where they come out ahead o' the white man every time. They got a natural gift o' speech. You take a lot o' white men in a public meetin', and there ain't one in a dozen could stand up an' tell his name and how far he lived from town. But get five thousand niggers together, and you can call on any one of 'em to speak on any subject you please, and he'll jump right up and talk without thinkin'."

The schools for whites and blacks are all separate. The presence of a single nigger in a white school would bring it to an end, and the possibility of the two races attending the same school is not to be imagined. The rancor which some of the Southern whites feel with regard to negro education is incomprehensible, as, for instance, that of an intelligent business man who said of an important colored school that the institution ought to be blown up with dynamite and the principal run out of the state. He declared he hoped to live to see the day when these virtuous objects would be accomplished, and the blacks given to understand that ignorance and plodding labor and complete white domination were their destiny for all time.



A Negro Schoolhouse

One story told for my benefit was that "There was a Georgia nigger who had been sent to the penitentiary, and the governor of the state give him his choice between bein' set free and goin' to Massachusetts, and he said he rather go back to the penitentiary."

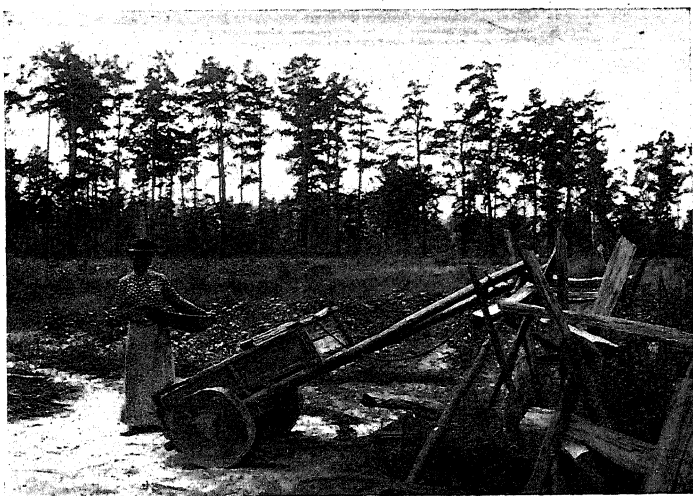
The joke perhaps travesties Massachusetts, yet our treatment of the negroes is scarcely angelic. We have the same feeling of superiority that exists in the South. This is characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race in its relation with all other races, and very likely the North would discriminate against the blacks more if they were with us in greater numbers. Nor is the Southern antipathy without any reasonable foundation. A colored

preacher recently declared: "The only way to get rid of the 'Jim Crow' car is to get rid of the 'Jim Crow' negro. If I could use two hundred thousand bars of soap on the unwashed negroes that travel on trains and hang around depots, I would solve the negro problem about twenty per cent."

The wisest advisers of the blacks think they will gain far less by clamor for their rights than by working quietly and steadily for better homes, for better and more general education, and for the ownership of property. By character and accomplishment they will surely win the respect of the whites and a worthy place in the country's civilization. To what development they may ultimately attain is uncertain. They have originality, inventiveness, and a real talent for music, but primarily they have strong bodies, and their immediate future is industrial.

Social equality, the bugbear about which one hears so much in the South, does not exist between the whites and blacks in any section of the United States. An ignorant negro is not welcomed into a refined Northern family, and there are sure to be some reserves in the case of any negro, whatsoever his attainments. Racial differences, independent of color, keep the whites and blacks apart, for it is the racial tendency to flock together. These differences are of nature's making, and there is no discredit in recognizing them. Every race needs to be self-reliant, and the negroes

must build up a worthy social life within their own ranks. Each success they gain in this direction deserves applause, and it is an encouraging fact that caste is developing among them. They no longer associate indiscriminately. Those of the rougher, coarser class find barriers put up between them and their betters which can only be removed by their own improvement, and this has a decided moral uplift.



A Farm Cart

It is often claimed by Southern men that the negroes were better off as slaves than they are now, with regard to physical comfort and all essential needs, but this view finds no indorsement among the negroes them-

selves ; and even the whites are all agreed that for the owners and the South itself slavery was a curse. "We never realized it," explained a Virginian, "but slavery was a great incubus. If the old conditions had continued, business could never have developed, few railroads would have been built, and we'd still be riding around in our chariots drawn by eight horses, and thinking our manner of life was superior to any other on the face of the earth. We were ready to fight for slavery then, and we'd have kept on fighting till this day if our resources hadn't been totally exhausted sooner. But now, if slavery could be restored by vote, it wouldn't get one supporter in a thousand !"

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